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NATIONAL REVIEW

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NATIONAL REVIEW

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The French Napoleon gold coin has reigned as a global standard of value for nearly 150 years!

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Over the decades since its creation, the 20 Franc has undergone many design changes and been the centerpiece of the monetary systems of many different nations. But the Napoleon III gold coin was struck for just a few short years during the 1850's and 1860's.

When Napoleon Bonaparte seized power, he embarked on a series of social, governmental, economic and military reforms that were unprecedented for his day. Say what you will about his methods; his court was brilliant (based on merit rather than birth), his dedication to the arts and sciences was unsurpassed and his legal and bureaucratic reforms were so efficient that they are still in use throughout the world today.

An important part of his reform program was the elimination of waste in government and the establishment of the Bank of France to rein in fiscal policy. The 20 Franc gold coin was created as the cornerstone

of a new monetary system. Struck in .900 fine gold, and weighing the equivalent of .1867 ounces of pure gold the 20 Franc became (along with the British Sovereign) one of the two standard gold coins of the world. It was, and is, readily recognized and valued in every land, giving its owner liquidity that even paper currencies do not enjoy.

This is truly one of the most important gold pieces you could own.

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These 20 Franc Napoleon III's, like many other international gold pieces, give you valuable benefits that bullion coins such as Krugerrands or Canadian Maple Leafs cannot match.

For one thing they afford a level of privacy that many investors treasure. According to Internal Revenue Service Procedure 92-103 many gold coins or bars must be reported on Form 1099-B when sold.

However, these Napoleons are specifically exempt from this rule. Obviously, new rules could be enacted but, under current regulation interpretations, *there are no broker reporting requirements whatsoever when you buy OR sell French 20 Franc gold pieces.*

▲ The Better Gold Choice

Description	Reportable	Subject to Confiscation	Premium
1/10 oz. America Eagles	NO*	YES	19.48%
1/10 oz. Australian Kangaroos	NO*	YES	15.34%
.1867 oz. French Napoleon	NO	NO	14.75%

*Fractional bullion gold pieces are not reportable under current regulations, although one-ounce coins may be.

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One of the most important advantages of the Napoleon is that they should be yours to keep forever.

You see, the U.S. government has already confiscated the gold of American citizens once before, through Executive Order 6102 issued by Franklin Roosevelt on April 5, 1933. However, Section 2(b) of that order, as well as later clarifications, *specifically excluded collector coins.*

You may feel that the chance of another gold confiscation is remote (and I agree). However, the stakes are high. So why buy mere bullion coins...why accept any unnecessary risk, no matter how remote?

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■ LETTERS ■

STOLEN TREASURE?

The fact that the Ottoman Empire conquered Greece did not give the Ottoman Empire title to the Greek antiquities, specifically the Elgin Marbles ("The Week," Dec. 20). By giving or selling the Elgin Marbles to Lord Elgin, the Ottomans essentially stole the treasures from Greece. A person who takes from a thief is required to return the goods to the rightful owner. A person who knowingly receives stolen goods is an accomplice to the theft.

The Israelis defeated the Jordanians in the Six-Day War. Do you think it would be permissible for the Israelis to sell the Dome of the Rock to a wealthy investor? I doubt the Muslims would think so.

Neil O'Brien
Dallas, Tex.

BACK TO SEATTLE

Ramesh Ponnuru doesn't seem to understand the stakes that drive the international trade rivalry that collapsed the World Trade Organization's "millennium round" ("After Seattle," Dec. 31). For example, he claims America's anti-dumping laws are aimed at the poor in the Third World. While Third World regimes do oppose U.S. law, the main assault was mounted by Japan and supported by Europe.

Anti-dumping laws are vital because markets do not work in the simplistic fashion Mr. Ponnuru believes. For example, the Asian economic crisis was the result of deregulation that allowed massive private borrowing to finance overcapacity. The market is supposed to liquidate such bad investments. Instead, troubled firms resorted to dumping to drive their rivals out of business. This "beggar-thy-neighbor" policy was backed by government subsidies to salvage strategic local industry. Eliminating our anti-dumping laws would disarm us in the face of such predatory attempts to shift the burden of failure from overseas to American soil.

The Clinton administration has not adequately used our laws, because it holds to the paternalistic concept of self-sacrificing hegemony. In this liberal doctrine, the U.S. should assume the costs of failures overseas, even if it means major sectors of American industry suffer. Yet, the lopsided, non-reciprocal demands made on

the U.S. in Seattle, from every corner of the globe, were beyond what even Clinton thought he could spin to the American public. While Clinton didn't really make "Seattle his Reykjavik," as William Safire has written, he had to walk away.

This is not an academic exercise. International economics is ultimately about the global balance of power, which depends to a large degree on industrial and financial strength. As in other arenas of conflict, national authorities must act to protect our long-term interests.

William R. Hawkins
Washington, D.C.

RAMESH PONNURU RESPONDS: *When foreign governments subsidize exports to the United States, they are effectively transferring wealth from themselves to American consumers. It is as irrational for us to worry about this transfer as it is for them to engage in it. Nevertheless, we slap countervailing duties on many subsidized products. The anti-dumping laws, which are routinely deployed against foreign companies that receive no subsidies at all, have nothing to do with this issue.*

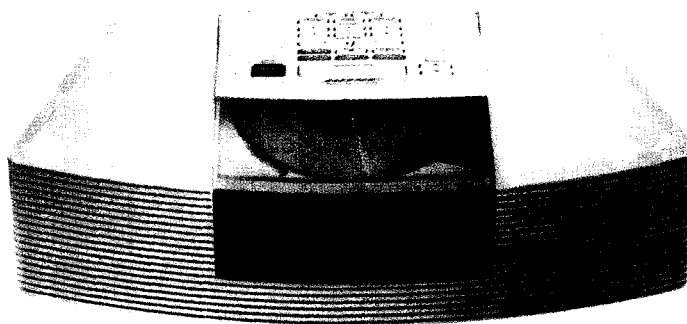
MUST IT END?

George F. Will writes accurately of the important contributions made by Mr. Buckley on *Firing Line* for the past 30 years ("A Farewell to *Firing Line*," Dec. 31). He correctly observes that both will be missed. Finally, Mr. Will reveals that his one appearance on *Firing Line* was his most enjoyable experience on television. Mr. Buckley is irreplaceable. But it would be great fun for Mr. Will and the dedicated viewers if he would give it a try.

Lee U. McGrath
Minneapolis, Minn.

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■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ At White House Christmas celebration, California children's choir sings politically correct song as President **Clinton** and **First Lady** smile their approval: "On the 12th day of Christmas my true love gave to me/ 12 eco-days/ Safe spotted owls/ Homes for the homeless/ Food for the hungry/ Produce organic/ No cauliflower/ Seas I can swim in/ Air I can breathe/ All solar power/ No rush hour/ Good guys on TV/ And a world where people are free." . . . Clinton says he will miss the White House movie theater more than anything else when he leaves office, in *People* magazine interview. . . . Little Rock plans to divert millions from local parks to purchase land for Clinton library, with Little Rock Zoo expected to suffer most. Says animal-rights activist **Ingrid Newkirk**: "Those poor animals are starving and abused. The idea that money is going to be taken away from them to fund Clinton's library is an abomination." . . . In CNN/USA *Today* poll, 50 percent approve House impeachment decision, up from 35 percent one year earlier. . . . Clinton ponders seeking federal reimbursement of more than \$5 million for **Lewinsky**- and **Whitewater**-related legal fees. . . . **Ken Starr** teaches weekly class at George Mason University law school titled "Advanced Problems in Current Constitutional Law." . . . **Vernon Jordan** on New York Senate race, in *Time*: "I'm praying, of course, that Hillary will win. If she doesn't—Lord, I'll have to call Revlon again."

■ After **Bill Bradley** proposes expanding earned-income tax credit, Vice President **Gore** describes his role in its creation: "I was the author of that proposal. I wrote that, so I say, 'Welcome aboard.' That is something for which I have been the principal proponent for a long time." Bradley counters by noting credit became law in 1975, one year before Gore was elected to Congress. . . . Gore raises more than \$1 million to refurbish official residence. Says **Peter Eisner** of Center for Public Integrity: "For donors, this is a better deal than giving to the campaign. Money is used to make Gore more comfortable. It

won't pay for television advertising, but it is something that Gore would probably remember—like the pool table." . . . **Shelby Steele**, in *Boston Globe* on ideas of Bradley adviser **Cornel West**: "They will be seen as far left, and kooky, and they will hurt Bill Bradley."

■ Former First Lady **Barbara Bush**, on her son: "He has his dad's brains. That's the good news." . . . **George W. Bush** on himself: "They said, 'He's got an empty suit.' And I said, 'Well, at least it's not an empty earth-toned suit.'" . . . **McCain** says gay could serve as president, but not in military. . . . More McCain: "If I could think of a way constitutionally, I would ban negative ads." . . . *New York Times*



headline: "With Eyes on Vice Presidency, Elizabeth Dole Plans to Endorse Bush for President." . . . **Lamar Alexander** endorses Bush. . . . *The Hotline* estimates 6 percent of New Hampshire population participated in media polls in final three months of 1999, assuming no person participated more than once. . . . Rep. **Roscoe Bartlett** (R., Md.) endorses **Steve Forbes**. . . . **Pat Buchanan**, on leaving the GOP: "The further I move away from it, the more I feel I've done the right thing and the less the emotional ties that exist to the old party."

■ In *Rolling Stone*, soul man **James Brown** names 97-year-old Sen. **Strom Thurmond** (R., S.C.) one of his heroes of the 20th century. . . . In Zogby poll, 36 percent say assassination of **JFK** is "crime of century," followed by 24 percent naming Oklahoma City bombing, and 11 percent picking **Martin Luther**

King Jr. assassination. . . . Home of late Sen. **Barry Goldwater** (R., Ariz.) goes on market for \$4.5 million. . . . On C-SPAN, **Brian Lamb** asks **Nancy Reagan** whether she can "have a conversation that makes sense" with husband. Says Mrs. Reagan: "No, not now."

■ In ruling against lawsuit claiming Christmas holiday for federal workers violates Constitution, Judge **Susan Dlott** writes: "The Establishment and Santa [are] both worthwhile Clauses." . . . Bi-weekly liberal magazine *The American Prospect* makes a remarkable admission: "You can hardly blame the conservatives for their dudgeon about American movies, however ineptly and demagogically it is articulated. When's the last time you saw a baldly right-wing American movie?" . . . American League of Lobbyists president **Kenneth E. Feltman** bemoans "the slanderous reputation that we have been given by self-serving politicians and reporters." . . . Internal Revenue Service cuts back: Fewer than one in 300 tax returns to be audited this year, down from one in 217 two years ago and one in 63 in 1981, says *New York Times*. . . . **Omni Hotels** decides to stop offering pay-per-view porn in rooms by June. . . . **Jacob** becomes top baby name for boys, ending 45-year streak by **Michael**. **Emily** leads for girls.

■ German officials crack code identifying code names of 47,000 East German spies active between 1950 and 1989, reports *Der Spiegel*. . . . Palestinian journalists seek to review membership of their professional organization, believing it filled with Palestinian Authority agents who stymie independent media. . . . In twelve-month period, Russia's U.N. cars in New York City rack up 14,437 parking tickets. . . . **Pope John Paul II** plans trip to Holy Land from March 21 to 26, first by a pontiff in 36 years.

■ Republican National Committee one-day "Gore Store" sells "I Invented the Internet" mouse pads, with proceeds benefiting United Way. Says flyer: "Help the RNC raise more money for charity than Al Gore gave in all of 1997—\$353."

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(LEFT TO RIGHT) EDWARD KENNEDY, GERALDO RIVERA, DAVID BONIOR, AL GORE, JANE FONDA, HILLARY CLINTON, PAUL WELLSTONE, AND JESSE JACKSON

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THE FIRST WORLD WAR - Most Americans know very little about World War I. We have paid little attention to its causes and how it changed the world. Renowned historian John Keegan examines The Great War and warns that we are dangerously close to repeating the conflict in the next century.

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RONALD REAGAN - Dinesh D'Souza presents a vivid portrait of the man himself, revealing the moral sources of his vision and leadership. Painting a marvelous portrait of a president "too confusing" for other biographers, D'Souza finds little enigma in the man who reinvigorated the nation and changed the world.

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HATING WHITEY - With his trademark iconoclastic style, reformed radical David Horowitz dissects the social double standard that dismisses black racism. The so-called civil rights leaders are outraged by, among other things his reference to Kwesi Mfume and Jesse Jackson as "racial ambulance chasers." You won't find this one on the front table of your bookstore!

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YEAR OF THE RAT - Mochtar Raddy, John Huang and Charlie Tite: these are the men who gathered illegal foreign campaign contributions and funneled them into the Clinton White House. Now you can read the details of this chilling tale and learn how Bill Clinton has been selling American security for campaign cash since 1992!

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THE WEEK

■ Ted Turner and Jane Fonda are Splitsville. So who gets CNN and who gets the anti-aircraft gun?

■ During the holiday season, George W. Bush, Orrin Hatch, and Gary Bauer caused a mini-flap by testifying to the importance of Christ in their lives. How to answer their critics? America is not a Christian nation, but it has long been overwhelmingly a nation of Christians—a sociological, and therefore a political fact. George Washington, who did more than any other Founder to teach freedom of religion by example, said that Americans should imitate the humility and charity of “the Divine Author of our blessed religion” in their public life. Politicians who make such statements insincerely will face a judgment more severe than that of the ACLU.

■ After running last year’s worst primary campaign, Elizabeth Dole is still angling for a chance to run this year’s worst vice-presidential campaign. How ambitious. Her endorsement of George W. Bush renewed talk of her as a veep pick, which at least has the advantage of not being motivated by crass political factors, since it would make no sense: Mrs. Dole has no retail political skills, no issues with which she is identified, no appeal to the GOP’s right, no ability to help deliver a state or region, and a temperament utterly unsuited to a national campaign. Bush often says you can judge candidates by the competence of people around them. Here is one association that wouldn’t flatter him.

■ New York governor George Pataki, too, yearns to be a vice-presidential candidate. But of which party? Certainly Pataki, who ousted Mario Cuomo in 1994, has lately been governing like a Democrat. In 1997, he saved rent controls in New York City; his 1998 budget increased spending by four times the inflation rate; state environmental programs are a porkfest. His latest idea is a cigarette-tax hike, which will certainly hike smuggling, but may not hike much in the way of revenue. Pataki spends and taxes under cover of a Wall Street boom, while the rest of the state’s economic infrastructure limps along in Rust Belt mode. While Republican social liberals still sell themselves as economically conservative, Pataki (who is pro-abortion) is as bad on dollars and cents as he is on life.

■ The latest figures confirm that the new investor class is growing as fast as—well, as the stock market itself. Since NAFTA and GATT cut taxes internationally, the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrials have tripled and the NASDAQ has quintupled. Seventy-nine million Americans now own stock, and half of them entered the markets in the

last decade. In 1989, only 9 million Americans owned equities worth more than \$50,000. By 1999, more than 39 million individuals owned that much, and 24 million held portfolios worth more than \$100,000. In 1989, the median portfolio was worth \$10,400. Today, it is \$50,000. Stocks now represent 38 percent of household wealth. As a result, Americans by the millions are changing their views on business, on their retirement plans, and on the returns to their “investments” in government programs such as Social Security. Yet no one in the presidential field has shown a hint of understanding how investors think or what they want. If only the political market moved as fast as the financial ones.

■ The Clinton administration, however, is willing to posture as the friend of the new investors. Its just-revived proposal for Universal Savings Accounts—in effect, 401(k)s where workers’ contributions would be matched by tax credits—is a cynical ploy, never written up as legislation or acted on by congressional Democrats. The administration’s goal is to get Republicans to denounce a middle-class tax cut. Republicans, including George W. Bush and John McCain, can propose their own tax cuts on investment income—or they can fall for the administration’s bait, in which case they will have only themselves to blame when Al Gore picks off the suburban vote.

■ President Clinton has indicated that he will not ask to be reimbursed for his legal expenses, though he thinks he would be entitled to do so—thus, like a prudent chief executive, establishing a precedent for successors as debauched and shameless as he is, should there ever be any.

■ Just when you think Al Sharpton’s rallies in New York can get no more vile, he outdoes himself—most recently with a new sidekick, Winnie Mandela. This Mandela is no Nelson Mandela: She is a terrorist, who does not blink at torture and murder. Traveling from Africa, she was detained briefly at Kennedy Airport—but the Clinton State Department saw to it that she was let in. “I don’t need anyone’s permission to see my children here in Harlem,” Mandela later huffed. “No CIA, no FBI or agent will keep me from my family.” Mandela does not think much of children or family: She had her thugs kill a 14-year-old boy, Stompie Seipei, who refused to lie in the way Mandela wanted. She encouraged and cooed about the practice of “necklacing,” an especially gruesome form of murder. The United States should not have permitted her to enter this country. But in Al Sharpton, it is true, she has found a perfect mate.

■ The Vermont supreme court ordered the state legislature to recognize same-sex “marriages” or at least to treat same-sex unions as functionally equivalent to marriages. The justices believe that they have merely extended the benefits of marriage to people who had been unfairly excluded from them. But they have, in the process, altered the institution beyond recognition. The link between marriage and reproduction—always complicated, and strained in recent decades—has now been completely severed. The law no longer has any principled ground for refusing to honor any sexual arrangement among people who profess some commitment to one another. Marriage in Vermont, in other words, has been not so much redefined as abolished. The presidential candidates, with exceptions such as Gary Bauer, have so far been inexcusably coy about such a momentous matter. Bill Bradley and Al Gore both say they personally oppose gay marriage, whatever that means. But they also oppose such measures as a California initiative to reaffirm the traditional understanding of marriage. The Republican candidates ought to ask the Democrats whether they plan to do anything to make their opposition effective—which, come to think of it, is a good question for them to answer as well.

■ Elian Gomez’s mother could not offer an opinion on his fate; she had died in the effort to bring him to this country and freedom. So the administration decided that he should be returned to her former husband in Cuba. Castro can turn off his demonstration machine, and resume his usual policy towards the families in his power, which is to impoverish and repress them.

■ President Clinton’s reappointment of Alan Greenspan as Fed chairman was correct—Greenspan has performed well in the post. He saw the market through the crash of 1987, avoiding a reprise of 1929. In the ’90s he brought inflation down gradually, from just above 5 percent at the beginning of the decade to less than 2 percent today. That development dramatically reduced the effective tax rates on capital gains and corporate investment, making for a “tax cut” that more than offset the president’s tax increase in 1993. On the other hand, Greenspan’s rhetoric, especially in recent years, has been disquieting. He sometimes speaks as though he believes the discredited notion that inflation is caused by strong growth and low unemployment, and his warnings about the stock market’s “irrational exuberance” go well beyond his legitimate role of promoter of price stability. Congress should in fact make the chairman’s role clear, by law, so as to reduce our dependence on the good sense of men such as Greenspan—who deserves our gratitude, if not our genuflection.

■ The sound you will hear from now until June or July, when the Clinton administration must decide whether a national missile-defense system is ready to be deployed, is kicking and screaming. The Cochran-Inouye law passed last year mandates that the administration deploy as soon as the technol-

ogy is available. But the administration maintains that cost, arms-control negotiations, and its evaluation of the missile threat facing the U.S. will also be considered, even though the statute regards these issues as settled (to wit: the cost is manageable; Russia is never going to give up the ABM Treaty; and the threat is real). The administration wants to preserve its Uriah Heep negotiating posture vis-à-vis Russia. It has already scaled back a prototype system to appease Russia. And yet the end may be near. Unless the administration wiggles out from under the law, ground will be broken in Alaska for a missile-defense site sometime this year—a clear violation of Article I of the ABM Treaty. That would set the stage perfectly for a Republican president to exercise America’s right to leave the treaty after giving six months’ notice—at long, long last.

■ The international criminal tribunal for former Yugoslavia is investigating possible war crimes committed by NATO during the Kosovo air campaign. After reports of the probe surfaced, the tribunal’s chief prosecutor issued a carefully worded statement that she is not conducting a “formal inquiry” into NATO’s actions, which left open the question of what exactly she is doing. The tribunal, created by the U.N. Security Council in 1993 with Clinton-administration sponsorship, proved a precursor to a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC), also eagerly sought by Clinton’s diplomats. But when the ICC treaty was adopted in July 1998, the administration did not sign, knowing that the treaty faced certain death in a hostile Senate. Critics said that the ICC would inevitably become politicized and anti-American, and that its highly autonomous prosecutor made our now-defunct independent counsel look like a model of forbearance. Scare tactics by Neanderthals, responded ICC advocates. Well, now. The inquiry, formal or not, vindicates the fears of ICC opponents and thus strengthens their political position. ICC advocates had been urging Clinton to sign the treaty after the 2000 elections, thereby locking in his successor but keeping it out of the campaign itself. Now this issue of American sovereignty is squarely before the candidates, like it or not.

■ German chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, having seen his party defeated in five consecutive state elections, decided to make a U-turn on economic policy. He announced plans to lower the top personal tax rate from 53 to 45 percent and the bottom rate from 24 to 15 percent. The corporate tax rate, now 40 percent, would drop to 25 percent, which would put the German rate below ours. In addition, the corporate capital-gains tax would be eliminated, which would make it profitable for large German companies to sell off some of the assets now cross-held with other firms, thus breaking up an interlocking corporatist system that has inhibited entrepreneurship for decades. German financial markets greeted the news boisterously, just as the markets in Japan reacted to the large tax cuts there last year. International investors, seeking the highest possible returns after taxes and inflation, will be

looking for the U.S. to cut taxes too. In 1999, foreign stock markets outperformed ours. Might foreign economies too?

■ Mrs. Melita Norwood is the lady who betrayed Britain and its allies by handing over nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union at a time when Stalin was desperate to build his bomb. "I don't regret what I did," she crows. "All I ever wanted was peace and socialism." She has just spent a peaceful and socialist Christmas secure in the knowledge that the authorities have decided not to prosecute her. Mrs. Norwood is 87 and of Latvian origin, and it so happens that an 86-year-old Latvian by the name of Konrad Kalejs has suddenly been discovered in an old-people's home in Britain. A former SS man, Kalejs is accused of war crimes, which naturally were committed outside British jurisdiction. Police have surrounded the home, questions have been raised in Parliament, and the government promises to deport him, though not to Latvia. He should of course be brought to account, but how illustrative that outside Mrs. Norwood's house are only reporters and well-wishers, congratulating her on her treason, a treason that could have led to mass murder and more.

■ Three years ago, ABC hired George Stephanopoulos and William Kristol to provide left-right commentary on its Sunday show, *This Week*. Last month, network brass dropped the right member of that duo, leaving the left member to give his opinions on Sunday, do "reported" pieces for *Good Morning America*, and appear on *Nightline* locked in thrilling combat with . . . David Gergen, his coworker in the Clinton communications shop. ABC News chief David Westin said, hilariously, that "over time we have an obligation to our viewers to make sure we present both sides of any issue" (emphasis added). *This Week* had indeed been failing in the ratings, but not owing to the "roundtable," on which Kristol appeared: Surveys indicated that this portion was the most popular of the show, and ratings actually went up in the final third of the hour (during which the roundtable aired), which is unusual. There is a bright note, however: CBS, perceiving its competitor's stupidity, invited Kristol to make an appearance on its own Sunday show, *Face the Nation*, the very week after his ABC contract expired. Is it too much to hope for? That the power of the marketplace will trump entrenched anti-conservative bias, of which ABC has just provided a stinking example?

■ Richard and Dawn Kelso left their son, Steven, 10 years old and suffering from cerebral palsy, in a hospital with a note asking that someone care for him. The stress was terrific: The Kelsos are not young (62 and 45), and Steven has had 130 operations in his life. They did not dump him on the highway: He has been treated many times at the hospital where they left him, and they dropped him off with his medications and possessions. They were conscious of having done something wrong: They turned themselves in to the police the next day. But they did—something wrong. Fate gave the Kelsos a terribly hard row, which they have been hoeing for a decade. It

was not beyond their wit or resources (Mr. Kelso owns a multimillion-dollar business) to have kept on, or more responsibly surrendered their charge. They let down the side—of humanity, Steven, and themselves.

■ President Clinton pardoned a surviving Port Chicago mutineer—one of the sailors in southern California who refused to continue loading ammunition on a Navy ship during World War II after an explosion killed 320 of their fellows. The men balked at a dangerous assignment—but no more dangerous than the loading job that had to be done by those who worked in their stead, and less dangerous than the *unloading* job that had to be done in the Pacific war zone, where the cargo was bound. Clinton sought, by his pardon, to wipe away a vestige of racism (most of the sailors who were killed and who mutinied were black). There is no pander to which he will not stoop. But there is also no pander, however base and unjustified, that his panderees will not accept. The problem of Clinton ends when he leaves office. The problem of race remains, and festers.

■ After living high in a redwood for 738 straight days, to keep it from being cut down, Julia "Butterfly" Hill returned to terra firma last month, having agreed to a settlement with the Pacific Lumber Company. According to the deal, Pacific will preserve the tree (which Butterfly named "Luna") and a 200-foot buffer zone around it, and will also grant Hill regular visiting rights. In return, Hill (or, rather, her backers) will reimburse Pacific \$50,000, to be donated to a nearby university. Implicit in the deal is that Pacific won't prosecute Hill for two years' worth of trespassing. Hill's tenacity is admirable (how long could *you* live on an 6-by-8-foot platform 160 feet off the ground?), and so are her PR skills (around 1,000 media interviews via cell phone, visits from Joan Baez and Woody Harrelson, etc.). But the real lesson here, of course, is more Milton Friedman than Earth First!: If environmentalists made a habit of purchasing the land they wish to sequester, they'd save a lot more trees—and avoid going two years without a bath.

■ Sean "Puffy" Combs—rapper, St. Bart's party planner, and pater-non-familias—was charged with pulling a gun in a Times Square nightclub, and he is certainly not the first musician to be involved in thuggish behavior: But at least Frank Sinatra could sing.

■ With the retirement of Charles Schulz, cartooning loses perhaps its most talented practitioner. By combining artistic simplicity with philosophical and even theological depth, *Peanuts* suggested the immense potential of comics as an art form. In one strip, for example, a friend tells Charlie Brown: "I've got this whole Santa Claus bit licked. . . . If there is a Santa Claus, he's going to be too nice not to bring me anything for Christmas no matter *how* I act . . . Right? Right! And if there *isn't* any Santa Claus, then I haven't really lost anything! Right?" In the final frame, Charlie Brown reflects:

"Wrong! But I don't know where!" This is a terse and eloquent summary of an issue that has flummoxed Christians since Paul. In another strip, Violet is asked: "Do you really think that Charlie Brown is as hopeless as you make him out to be?" She answers: "He's worse! He has *no* redeeming features whatsoever! I just can't think of enough bad things to say about him!" Overhearing this, a wistful Charlie Brown comments to the reader: "I'm infinite!" That's Blaise Pascal on the human condition—in four cartoon frames. You're a good man, Charles Schulz.

■ New England WASPs began losing clout over a century ago, as the Adamses discovered. Elliot Richardson, square of jaw and glass frame, did not have the special savvy to recapture it. He starred in a fortuitous moment of political theater, resigning as attorney general rather than obey President Nixon's order to fire special prosecutor Archibald Cox. (Richardson and deputy William Ruckelshaus, who also quit, advised solicitor general Robert Bork to do the deed, to maintain continuity in the Justice Department.) Richardson took part in D-Day; filled numerous appointive posts competently, if without distinction; batted .500 in quest of elective office. With his death, at age 79, the species joins the passenger pigeon, the Carolina parakeet, and the great auk in the list of lost American fauna.

DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL

Don't Retreat

PRESIDENT CLINTON, Vice President Gore, and Hillary Clinton have all in recent weeks disavowed the administration's "don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy toward homosexuals in the military. The president cited the case of Army Pfc. Barry Winchell, who was beaten to death by a fellow soldier after months of harassment.

Winchell's murder was, first and foremost, the responsibility of the murderer, Pvt. Calvin Glover, and his accomplice, Spec. Justin Fisher. It was, secondarily, a failure of unit discipline. Glover's superiors should have acted against the harassment long before it became murderous. The exclusion of avowed homosexuals from the military, on the other hand, had little to do with the murder. Soldiers who objected to Winchell's dating a transvestite would not have looked more favorably on the relationship had it been announced in public. The attempt to blame military policy both excuses the culpable parties and cynically exploits the murder (in much the same way that Matthew Shepard's murder was exploited to promote "hate crimes" laws).

Mrs. Clinton, for her part, argues that the increase in the number of people discharged for homosexuality shows that "don't ask, don't tell" is not working. The president, making the same point, added that "the leaders of our military" were not implementing the policy as they had "pledged" in 1993. If the commander in chief believes there is widespread insubordina-

tion, one might expect him to do something about it besides taking potshots at the military in CBS radio interviews. But in truth, the military appears by and large to be implementing "don't ask" conscientiously.

The key evidence on this point is that 80 percent of discharges are based on statements voluntarily made by service members. The number of discharges based on homosexual acts has actually declined since 1994. Most of the statements, moreover, are made in the first term of enlistment. Military sociologist Charles Moskos offers a reasonable explanation for these numbers: "Whether you're gay or not, saying you are is now the quickest way to leave the military with an honorable discharge."

Allowing open homosexuals to serve in the military would have several undesirable consequences. It would make it harder to enforce the prohibition on sexual activity between service members, a prohibition necessary to prevent sexual competition, protectiveness, and favoritism from undermining military virtues. It would make heterosexual service members feel their sexual privacy invaded; and that could make the services' recruitment problems, already severe, that much worse. (Nobody contends that legions of homosexuals are eager to sign up if only the policy were changed.) Finally, it would almost certainly lead to expressions of group solidarity—Gay Pride Day and the like—that, again, would be incompatible with the military ethos.

None of this means that the current policy is ideal. The same considerations that militate against allowing open homosexuality in the military argue even more strongly against the expanded role for women in the services. And the military was probably better able to have an effective "don't ask, don't tell" policy when it was not explicit: If the Winchell case proves anything, it is that the issue now roils the military in disruptive and sometimes dangerous ways. Finally, there is the problem that the current policy is illegal: The law passed by a Democratic Congress in 1993 was not a "don't ask, don't tell" policy but a reaffirmation of the exclusion of homosexuals. If the next president is a better enforcer of the laws than Clinton, he will also be a better commander in chief.

RUSSIA

Exit Yeltsin

THE coup against Boris Yeltsin illustrates the way they do things in today's Kremlin. They prefer deals now to dungeons and bullets, and very skilled they are at them too. Like everybody else in town, apparently, Yeltsin had become too greedy, and utterly careless. The Moscow media have taken to publishing damning details of his foreign accounts and credit-card transactions for sums way beyond his declared means. Charges of corruption looked certain to compromise him and his chosen successor, Vladimir Putin, in the run-up to the presidential election scheduled for June. If Yeltsin were to go immediately, Putin could hope to turn this election into

a formality. In return, Yeltsin and his family are guaranteed immunity from prosecution and even investigation, with other perks on top. All of the Yeltsins may continue as usual with their handy credit cards. It would be slapstick, except for that hint of blackmail.

No matter where the money came from, it might be argued, no amount of it is enough to reward Yeltsin. His epic struggle for power with Mikhail Gorbachev did much to destroy Communism and the Soviet system. A thorough Communist in outlook and experience, Yeltsin after 1991 had to reeducate himself as best he could in the very different ideas and practices of a free society. He resorted to force against his own parliament and peoples, notably the Chechens, and in his resignation address he apologized for this, after a fashion. When it might have been possible to play the Russian nationalist card against Ukraine and the Baltic states, he refused that dangerous temptation. Had he stood down at the time of the last presidential election in 1996 he might have entered the history books as something of a great man, flaws and all, rather than the sad figure he has become, out of touch, vodka bottle in one hand and credit cards in the other.

Putin became a KGB colonel in his twenties, and so by definition is an able man but not very nice. He makes no apology for deploying massive force against the Chechens and anyone else in need of a lesson. He claims to be holding Russia together, and this reappearance of the nationalist card delights many of his fellow Russians. Here is an old-style Party apparatchik in command of the new tricks of spin-doctoring, such as visiting the troops for photo opportunities and planting articles in major foreign newspapers. Is the Yeltsin deal a precedent? Will everyone with dubious credit-card transactions be able to count on the blind eye? The huge majority of Russians would pay a high price for the introduction of the rule of law. Putin may well be the man for that, but in that case he will have to rethink and reform the methods he has employed so far.

CULTURE WATCH

The Liberal Millennium

THE millennia come and go, but the liberal culture remains. The most recent evidence of its tenacity was in the plethora of lists celebrating great figures of the era just ending.

Two academics at Texas A&M sent questionnaires to 137 other academics to determine the hundred greatest speeches of the century, which were listed in *USA Today*. What can you say of a ranking that puts Barbara Jordan's 1976 Democratic convention keynote—feistily delivered, but vapid—at #5, ahead of anything by Ronald Reagan? That brings Jordan in again, at #13 (for her statement on articles of impeachment), ahead of Douglas MacArthur's "Old Soldiers Never Die"? (Jesse Jackson and Mario Cuomo also beat the general.) Presentism rules: John Jay Chapman's astonishing 1912 condemnation of lynching is forgotten, while Ann Richards's

coronation at the 1988 Democratic convention is commemorated. So too does secularism rule: The clerics on the list tend to be political and black—Jackson, Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X—while Billy Graham, one of the most compelling podium presences of a generation, is invisible.

Other lists correctly identified commanding figures, but mistook their significance. Franklin D. Roosevelt was widely hailed for "saving capitalism." From whom? The turbulent spirits, identified by New Deal publicists from Arthur Schlesinger Jr. on as proto-revolutionaries, were marginal figures. Father Coughlin's candidate in the 1936 election got less than 2 percent of the vote; the Socialist party ran less well in the Thirties than it had in 1920, and the Communists trailed far behind it. The nation, it is true, was sunk in a Depression—deepened and lengthened by FDR himself, whose mix of improvisation and high tax rates kept the economy crawling until war production finally boosted it in the Forties. There remains the X-factor of FDR's high spirits: a great gift (the young Ronald Reagan, along with many other Americans, voted for him four times). But that only makes a bad record mixed.

Similarly, Gandhi is a compelling and in some ways representative figure of the anti-colonial movement: charismatic, shrewd, resenting the West (he advised the British to surrender to Hitler in the early days of World War II) even as he was influenced by it (he discovered the *Bhagavad Gita* in London). He succeeded in his main goal—to free India without warfare. But he was helpless against the dark passions of his own people—communal massacres during the partition claimed millions of lives—and he had no useful vision for their future: India is only now emerging from the funk of a half-century of Congress Party economic policy.

Conservatives can draw up counter-lists, but that suggests a retreat-to-the-wilderness strategy that is ultimately self-defeating. We should never forget what's bad about the lists we have, though, or about the spirit that generates them. Culture is like an ocean liner: Determined tugboats can nudge it, but the turning radius is very wide—and there are lots of tugs pushing it in the opposite direction.

OBITUARY

Charles Burton Marshall, R.I.P.

'BURT" MARSHALL—one never called him Charles twice—was a beloved, eccentric, and, let's face it, verbose fixture at *NATIONAL REVIEW* in the early 1980s, coming in to New York every other week to write editorials on foreign policy and strategy, an assignment that he inherited from James Burnham. Brother of the even more renowned S.L.A. Marshall, Burt had had a distinguished career as a newspaperman, historian, author, and scholar. After service in the Army in World War II, he held a number of posts as adviser to various congressional committees and to the State Department. He was in his mid 70s when he signed on with us.

He would walk through the door of a Tuesday morning, wearing an informal sports shirt fastened at the neck by a Western string-tie with turquoise claps, his tentative, shy smile at the ready. We soon learned that Burt had been everywhere, knew everyone, was an omnivorous reader, and like another of NR's beloved foreign-policy wonks, Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, was not only happy to lavish his scholarship on you, but insisted on it. If you listened to his story to the end, you were usually amply repaid, as when it turned out that what the Nazi general in a coma in Nuremberg was recounting in such an agitated manner was the tale of his youthful fling with Sumner Welles. If you stuck it out with

Burt, you could learn a lot, even if your deadlines suffered.

Burt Marshall wrote cogent and informed, if somewhat rococo, editorials for NATIONAL REVIEW. His book reviews were recognizable by an unmistakable stylistic flair. He was a taskmaster, demanding total precision. For example, he felt compelled to reprove a biographer of Ulysses S. Grant for his "misapplication" of the word "celebrants," "which," wrote Burt, "when used to mean celebrators [is] akin to calling protestors 'protestants.'"

In time, the fortnightly trip to New York became too much for him. He retired in 1983 and died last month, in Oregon.

—PRISCILLA L. BUCKLEY

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Memo to: WFB

From: Christo

Subject: *How Space Shuttles Got That Way or Why Engineering Is an Exact Science*

Pup, have you seen this? If you've ever wondered . . .

The U.S. standard railroad gauge (distance between the rails) is 4 feet, 8.5 inches. That's an exceedingly odd number. Why was that gauge used? Because that's the way they built them in England, and the U.S. railroads were built by English expatriates. Why did the English build them like that? Because the first rail lines were built by the same people who built the pre-railroad tramways, and that's the gauge they used. Why did "they" use that gauge then? Because the people who built the tramways used the same jigs and tools that they used for building wagons, which used that wheel spacing. Okay! Why did the wagons have that particular odd wheel spacing? Well, if they tried to use any other spacing, the wagon wheels would break on some of the old, long-distance roads in England, because that's the spacing of the wheel ruts.

So who built those old rutted roads? The first long-distance roads in Europe (and England) were built by Imperial Rome for its legions. The roads have been used ever since. And the ruts in the roads? The initial ruts, which everyone else had to match for fear of

destroying their wagon wheels, were first formed by Roman war chariots. Since the chariots were made for (or by) Imperial Rome, they were all alike in the matter of wheel spacing. The U.S. standard railroad gauge of 4 feet, 8.5 inches derives from the original specification for an Imperial Roman war chariot. Specifications and bureaucracies live forever. So the next time you are handed a specification and wonder what horse's ass came up with it, you may be exactly right, because the Imperial Roman war chariots were made just wide enough to accommodate the back ends of two war horses. Thus, we have the answer to the original question.

Now the twist to the story . . .

There's an interesting extension to the story about railroad gauges and horses' behinds. When we see a Space Shuttle sitting on its launch pad, there are two big booster rockets attached to the sides of the main fuel tank. These are solid rocket boosters, or SRBs. The SRBs are made by Thiokol at their factory in Utah. The engineers who designed the SRBs might have preferred to make them a bit fatter, but the SRBs had to be shipped by train from the factory to the launch site. The railroad line from the factory had to run through a tunnel in the mountains. The SRBs had to fit through that tunnel. The tunnel is slightly wider than the railroad track, and the railroad track is about as wide as two horses' behinds. So, the major design

feature of what is arguably the world's most advanced transportation system was determined over 2000 years ago by the width of a Horse's Ass!

Which makes for a kind of nice bedtime story.

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: You recently wrote: "The new statist are dizzy with concern over the consequences of this recapture of the Tenth and Eleventh Amendments, wondering whether it will infect the whole welfarist edifice." By "statist" I presume you mean one who is *anti*-state government. Am I correct? Are you correct? Is the English language correct? Or am I being a purist, i.e. anti-pure?

Yours truly,
Richard L. Leed
Ithaca, N.Y.

Dear Professor Leed: Nicely done. I can't imagine why I wrote "Tenth and Eleventh Amendments" when I intended Ninth and Tenth. That was *definitely* an anti-purism. On the meaning of "statist," I had in mind those who are enthusiastic about central authority: anti-devolutionists. See, e.g., *Our Enemy the State*, by A. J. Nock, or similar essays by Herbert Spencer, Sumner, et al. The assumption of the *anti*-statists is that we have a better chance giving political authority to 50 state governments than to one central government.

Cordially,

—WFB

The New CENTURY

THESE are the best of times, to borrow a famous phrase from Charles Dickens, and the worst of times as well. Being sane men and women, we know that we have to make of it what we can. It was always so, and always will be. And yet the clicking up on Father Time's speedometer of another millennium brings with it a sense of adventure, in which fear, alas, is a component. How are things going to turn out? NATIONAL REVIEW takes the opportunity to offer its own Guide for the Perplexed.

America first. No single country, or empire, was previously able to project such power, or to satisfy the aspirations of so many of its citizens. Leadership should keep it that way, unless its leadership degenerates into what Richard Brookhiser calls "buddyship." Robert Conquest cautions against seeing the world through American spectacles. Whole layers of American intellectuals contrarily wish their own country ill, and so do many Europeans busily but vainly trying to manufacture a political union with manifestly anti-American designs. Democracy on the American model may now exemplify success to most of the world's peoples, but Jean-François Revel observes that "the totalitarian temptation" never dies: Human beings like to boss, and even to be bossed.

In 1900, intelligent observers almost unanimously believed that the century ahead would be uniquely benign. Reality then destroyed, or should have destroyed, any idea of progress as inevitable. Technology may have changed the nature of war, as Eliot Cohen analyzes it, but warfare itself is set to persist for the same old motives and for the same old ends. This seems likely to be proved true in the Middle East, where the struggle between Israelis and Arabs turns upon identity as much as territory. "Sanguine" is the careful adjective Norman Podhoretz uses to qualify his hope that the Jewish people will continue to outlast their enemies for another millennium.

Pleasure in doing something well for its own sake is a general ambition, and one that lies at the root of art. One feature of the departing century—particularly depressing because it spreads so fast from the public domain to the private, infecting relationships and tastes—has been the conversion of creativity into ugliness and transgression. Saul Bellow is not prepared to write literature off, and Paul Johnson is positively bullish about the prospects of artistic revival, with new techniques in prospect. Postmodernism, in Richard Pipes's formulation of it, holds that "one man's truth is as good as any other's." This doctrine has done more than its fair share to replace morality and objectivity with the aggressivities of snake-oil merchants and fifteen-minute celebrities. For Pipes, the study of history returns us to the understanding of collective behavior and memory that must condition the future.

Will the children be like their forebears? Is human nature a constant? Charles Murray tells us that neuroscientists are about to master the workings of the brain. Choices and preferences could turn out to hinge on genetics. Doctrines of egalitarianism would therefore become not only unenforceable, but meaningless. Murray foresees "a paradigm shift"—meaning that, for better or (less likely) worse, a brave new world is at hand.

If our guides are right, we can be cheerful without Great Expectations (to follow through with Dickens). The appropriate stance seems to be that of a hitchhiker, thumb-up at the side of a highway stretching over the hills and far away.

—DAVID PRYCE-JONES

AMERICA

PLURIBUS, AND UNUM

RICHARD BROOKHISER

AS with a wedding, the next century holds for America something borrowed, something old, and something new. There are reasons that all these developments could make us blue, but, since they seem unavoidable, we should try to make the best of them.

In 1814 British and American diplomats, trying to end the

War of 1812, were deadlocked over a British proposal to reserve a North American homeland for London's Indian allies. John Quincy Adams was indignant: The population of the United States was already over seven million. Was it "in human power to check [the country's] progress by a bond of paper?" The idea of an Indian homeland was "opposing a feather to a torrent."

In 2000, the population of Mexico has broken, or will soon break, the 100 million barrier. That is less than the population of the United States, and it will probably never be greater than the American number. But the Mexican birthrate is higher than ours, and proximity and prosperity will continue to draw Mexicans north. If our immigration policy is prudent—Pat Buchanan's proposed five-year pause is sensible, even moderate—Mexicans will come more slowly. If it is feckless, they will keep coming at a brisk pace. One way or another, we can count on more of them. Millions are already here. The largest ethnic groups in the United States

are, as they have been for over a hundred years, English, German, and Irish. But Mexicans are vaulting up the Top Ten. This is happening not just in California and Texas. The Rio Grande flows through every restaurant kitchen in New York City, and every upstate orchard.

Government policy can shape the effects. If we persist in multicultural race-mongering, as every politician from George W. Bush to the average left-winger is bent on doing, we will have monoglot Tammany Halls, corrupt and probably gang-ridden, demanding handouts as the price for ignoring radical calls for *reconquista*. This will be partly the fault of the culture the Mexicans bring with them, partly the fault of the way we handle them. At best, we could get communities like the one in south Texas that invited me to an annual reenactment of Washington crossing the Delaware; the event was accompanied by a prom whose king and queen smiled below Aztec cheekbones.

However the politics works out, there will be a shift of gravity within the American Catholic Church. As Mexicans become one of its largest ethnic groups, Americans will get a chance to meet Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico's patroness. Until recently the Mexican government was ferociously anti-clerical but, as the Mexican-American essayist Richard Rodriguez has pointed out, Mexico's Virgin always remained the most important figure in the culture of ordinary Mexicans. She appeared in a vision to an Indian in 1531 and verified her presence by pouring roses into his cloak. When he emptied them, her image was left on the cloth. The relic has been displayed in a cathedral outside Mexico City ever since. The one time I saw it, it had been moved from a structurally unsound Baroque building into an ugly modern church resembling a bomb shelter. Heedless of the architecture, Mexicans moved down the aisles towards the altar on their knees. Greater than my Protestant dislike of their manners was my astonishment at their boldness: If the image was what they thought it was, I would be too abashed to approach it in any fashion. Without much shopping around, you can already buy palm cards with the Virgin's picture at big-city American newsstands; if your cabbie is Mexican, you might see her stuck to the meter. You'll be seeing more of her. In the wider culture, we may see a touch of Mexican mordancy coloring Halloween—skeletons playing musical instruments, skeleton wedding ceremonies, and so forth. At least those things are funny; they will be an improvement on the slasher-film gore and homosexual paraphernalia that have already swamped the holiday.

So forget the Cuban boy and the Dominican drug dealers: They affect only the East Coast. Mexico abuts our two largest states, and Mexicans will be the Hispanics visible in many other states besides.

A NATION OF BOLINGBROKEANS

One reason cultural movements are so important is that, once established, they can last a long time. Consider the staying power of our forgotten Founding Father, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke.

I first read Bolingbroke while trying to understand 18th-century America. I was first struck by his relevance to 20th-century America during the stillborn presidential campaign of Colin Powell. Who was Powell, but an aspirant to the throne of the Patriot King, one of Bolingbroke's fantasy figures?

Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751) was a talented rake and Tory politician who peaked in his thirties, during the reign of Queen Anne. Marooned by the Whig ascendancy that fol-

lowed, he cobbled together a political theory to fit his resentments and expressed it in brilliant, if tinselly, journalism. His writing had only a marginal effect on British history, but, although he never set foot in the Thirteen Colonies, he was wildly popular in America. Edmund Burke, jibing at him after his death, asked who any longer read Bolingbroke. Who ever read him through? John Adams gave the American answer: "I, I, myself, I have read him through, more than fifty years ago, and more than five times in my life, and once within five years past." By now, no one reads him. We don't have to: He's in our hard drives.

Bolingbroke fashioned the politics of vigilance. So long as Americans are happily plodding along, they do not give his thoughts a thought. But the moment they become unhappy with the political status quo, their anger and their energy almost inevitably fall into his patterns. The corrupt establish-

ment, using money and patronage to bolster its power; the education campaign, designed to rally the still-untainted nation; the savior outsider, who will rebuke the squabbling pols—all these elements are pure Bolingbroke, and they recur in every reformist crusade, left, right, or center. The John Birch Society, Ralph Nader, John McCain, Common Cause, Ross Perot, socialists railing at Wall Street, southerners railing at abolitionists, northerners railing at the slave power, patriots railing at the Stamp Act—all are sons of the frisky viscount.

It is easy to find the mythical monsters and Gardens of Eden that decorate the Bolingbrokean map of the world. The most obvious is the exaggerated role it assigns the outsider. Consider all the military men who have made it to the White House (Washington, Jackson, Harrison, Taylor, Grant, Theodore Roosevelt, Eisenhower) or gotten the nominations of major parties (Scott, McClellan, Hancock). In the last two hundred and thirty years, by contrast, Britain has made only one general—the Duke of Wellington—prime minister. Consider the rash of outsider politicians, beginning with Jesse Jackson, who have run for president in recent years. Half the people onstage during the last three Republican debates of 1999 had never



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*Our Lady of Guadalupe:
You'll be seeing more of her.*

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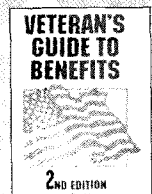


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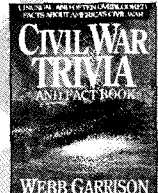
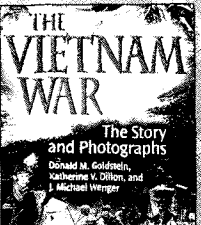
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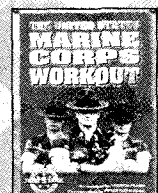
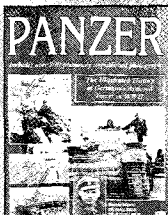
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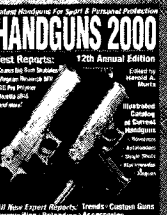



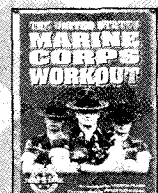


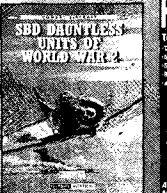




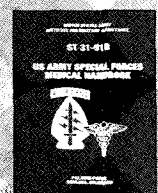
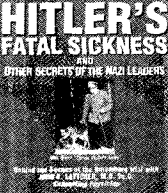


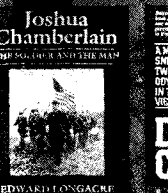




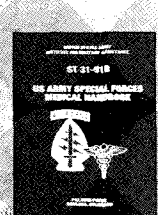
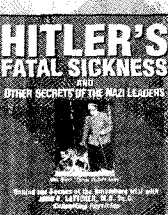


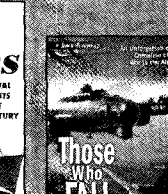



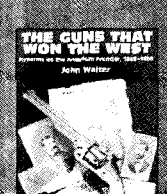


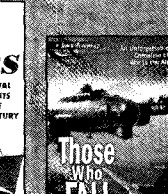









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been elected to anything; the virgins would have been a majority if Buchanan had not deserted to the Reform party, to compete with a real-estate developer and a wrestler.

The romance of the outsider is distracting because it distorts reality. The greatest American outsiders were in fact consummate insiders and wire-pullers: Honest Abe was a railroad lobbyist; Ike played tough customers like Harry Truman and Richard Nixon as if they were banjos. Their mastery of the black arts of politics was indispensable to them in their achievements. We might expect more of our politicians if we realized that some politicians have done great things.

Another criticism of the politics of vigilance is that it lets the people off the hook. In Bolingbroke's Britain, there was a hereditary monarch and many seats in Parliament were rotten boroughs. In today's America, every major national officeholder except judges is elected. If we don't like the leaders we have, we have no one to blame but ourselves.

This critique is true, but it too often ushers in an observation that liberals make use of: People want contradictory things (no pork, except mine; no welfare, except the middle class's). Since the people are confused, why not let the establishment go about its business undisturbed?

Yes, of course the people are confused; but they always are. It's up to politicians and advocates to help them sort out their inclinations. It matters a lot, then, where the establishment wishes to lead them. When anti-populist arguments are deployed by Federalists urging a strong military, or Anglophiles hoping to aid Britain before Pearl Harbor, one can endorse them. When they are used by commuters on the Third Way to endorse multiculturalism or a multilateral foreign policy, they have a different value. The politics of vigilance is simplistic in its analysis, and often mistaken in its ends. But it can act as a necessary corrective, and we would be poorer if we lost it. Fortunately, that won't happen.

BUDDIES INSTEAD OF LEADERS

As for the new face of America, it is borrowed from no one, made entirely by ourselves. It is a happy face—too happy. In daily life, it is the face of informality: casual Fridays, stretch waistbands, gimme caps or watch caps instead of brimmed hats, rock 'n' roll in megachurch services. In public life, it is the face of buddyship, rather than leadership.

You would not know it, looking at how we behave today, but we were not always so informal. One of the great apocryphal stories of the Founding involves Washington, Hamilton, and Gouverneur Morris, the witty ladies' man who wrote the Constitution. Hamilton bet Morris a dinner that he wouldn't go up to Washington, slap him on the back, and say, "My dear General, I am glad to see you looking so well." Morris gave the slap and won the meal, though he said later that the scowl Washington gave him was the worst moment of his life. Morris, incidentally, had scalded his right side as a boy, lost a leg in a carriage accident, and lived in Paris during the Terror; Washington's scowls must have been something indeed.

Now presidents and presidential candidates high-five voters, grip their elbows, and flop down in their booths at IHOPs. Sometimes the poor voter cringes; all he wants to do is eat his Lumberjack Special. We have reached the point where the common man has more dignity than would-be

presidents. Not that he has much, as any spin around the television dial shows. From audiences in football stadiums to audiences of Jerry Springer, we look like a nation of slobs, leavened by freaks. When we were small and weak, we had to stand on our dignity. Often we stood too stiffly: Touchy American rhetoric was a byword among amused European visitors. Now that we are world hegemonies, we can afford a grin, a yell, a pumped fist, or the great adolescent "whatever."

The problem of leadership in this country is, by its nature, a delicate one. Our founding document declares that all men are created equal—a statement of rights. Yet we rely on inequality of character and ability, trusting that superior men will come to the top in times of crisis. Our anxieties used to coalesce around the symbolic activity of horsemanship. A horse and rider is an imposing combination, especially if the observer is on foot. For centuries in Europe, owning a horse was the practical definition of an aristocrat, as many surnames (Chevalier, Cavaluzzo, Ritter) attest; the Royalist party during the English Civil War were the Cavaliers. When Richard Rumbold, an English Puritan, was executed for a Restoration-era plot, he said on his scaffold that he could never believe that Providence had sent "a few men into the world, ready booted and spurred to ride, and millions ready saddled and bridled to be ridden." In the last letter of his life, to a committee celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of American independence, Thomas Jefferson quoted Rumbold's sentiments, and adopted them as a motto for our system and our hopes. Yet Jefferson was an excellent horseman himself, and rode the political currents of his time with enormous skill.

Horses have disappeared from ordinary life, outside of race-tracks and city police departments. The expectation that leaders will lead has gone, too. Yet they retain their power, even if they slap our backs; when an event ends, they leave in motorcades, with armor plate and tinted glass.

When the form is lost, the thing remains, and it becomes worse for the loss of the form. Buddyship is not just gross; it weakens, and lulls us, too.

NR

THE WEST

VICTORY, FOR NOW

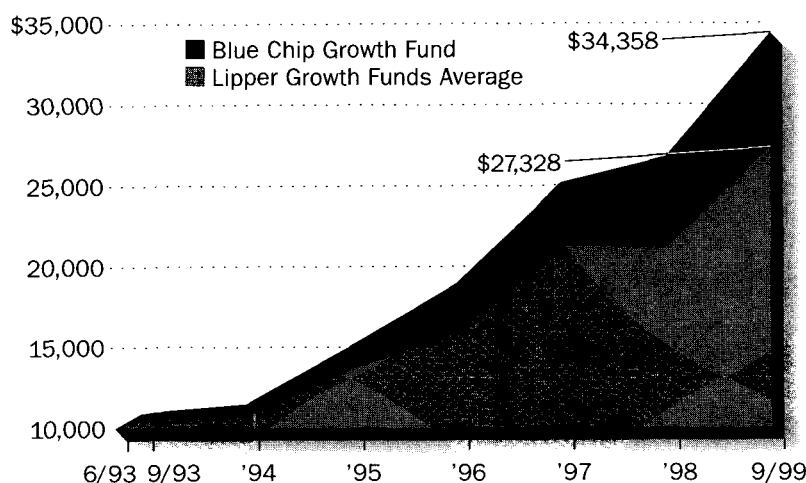
ROBERT CONQUEST

WE can presumably take it for granted that a real world order can come about only among a community of pluralist nations. We can presumably agree that nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction must, by deterrence or defense, or a combination of these, be denied their ability to ruin the planet. We can see that the responsibility, and the capacity, to cope with all this is largely borne on the shoulders of what we call the West. And we can note that there

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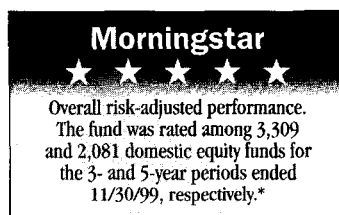
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are weaknesses in Western perceptions and Western political arrangements that are, in this context, deplorable.

It is urged that the West's pluralist political and social order won a tremendous victory with the downfall of Soviet Communism. And with this goes the claim that the totalitarian ideologies have similarly, and simultaneously, been exposed and defeated in the intellectual sphere. Well, yes. But the West is still faced with Communist regimes in existence, from the insane Kimocracy that is processing plutonium in Pyongyang, to the shaken but unreconstructed Chinese mainland regime. Nor can we believe that the sensible Western policies that brought down the Soviets are being adequately remembered or applied in these still dangerous cases—which is to say that there is something wrong with the political consciousness of the West.

Once one says that, one opens a whole cask of worms. It implies that delusions and false leads, far from being extinct, are still flourishing. Where should one start? If we consider the climate of intellectual opinion as a whole, we find, it is

**There is something wrong
with the political consciousness
of the West.**

true, that not only the Communist myth, but even the Socialist idea in the West is moribund. That is indeed progress. As with the elimination of smallpox, however, it does not mean that similar infections may not emerge. And we find in many Western countries—especially France—that the idea of massive state control is still powerful, both politically and intellectually. The difference between the new *étatisme* and the old is that the present attitude leaves certain areas of capitalist initiative untouched—like the private plots peasants were allowed to keep under Soviet collectivization.

In any case, at the political level, we see a meld of state and capitalist bureaucracies into something resembling a corporatist society. And it may be noted that this type of corporatism, with a capitalist element merged into (and controlled by) the state machine, is the sort of order that seems to be emerging in China. If so, we see an aberrant and paradoxical confirmation of the old “convergence” theory advanced by John Kenneth Galbraith and others. Such a corporatism, if established in Western societies, is bound to lead to a degeneration of democratic habits, civic relations, and, in the long run, mental independence, and so to an inability to cope with world or other problems.

In its European mode, this corporatism presents something described by French critics as “pink fascism,” enforced by ill-instructed, if well-meaning, recruits to the intelligentsia. This milieu would, in the old days, have become Marxist, and hence largely unassimilable to the Western political world

Mr. Conquest exposed the Soviet Union in his 1968 book, *The Great Terror*. His latest book is *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*.

proper, but, divested of ideology proper, it is now scampering through the institutions. Institutions have, of course, to exist, or to be created, in a form suitable for such a cadre, institutions into which this cadre can inject the subjective justifications for the sort of activism previously provided by Marxist, or other, ideology.

BRUSSELITIS

The prime example is the European Union. Here we have the case of a bureaucratic drive whose much-needed justification, or false consciousness, is toward a supposedly better, or deeper, or more united political continent—which is to say, a generality that avoids the now obviously untenable complete utopianism of the old ideologies, while still projecting the image, for both addicts and opponents, of a grander, or more progressive, or more important future. The result has been a bureaucratic nightmare, a Brussels that—even after the public scandals of 1999—still cannot account for billions of dollars in its expenses; that is amenable to no serious control; that inflicts on those under its sway regulations by the thousand, in every sphere from wages to sausages; that seeks to destroy the common-law culture of Britain in favor of continental statist rule.

In this context the natural links of Britain are with the United States and the former Dominions. The international objection to the EU is, of course, that it is divisive of the West. In so far as there is a “European” culture in the sense implied, it subsists also in the “Europe Overseas.” But most of, or the most important part of, that transoceanic transplant is in the sphere seeded by Britain rather than by continental Europe. The links so implied, therefore, must—from a Brussels point of view—be blocked. For, as is now often and openly said in European circles, the aim is to compete with, to exclude, and in general to do down the United States. That is to say, the EU is both implicitly and explicitly anti-American—and this in a world in which a greater closeness, rather than a greater mutual hostility, is needed in the non-totalitarian world.

But there is good news: This EU business is doomed to failure. The “Europe” that is to become a united state has none of the necessary qualifications: shared ethnicity, traditions, economic level, civic habits—nothing. All such unificatory federations of disparate peoples have collapsed (the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, to name two). This is not the place to develop the whole range of arguments against the “Europe” concept—which (amongst other themes) I have dealt with in my recent book, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*. But still it is appropriate to insist here on the American interest in discouraging its development, and in offering alternative cohesions.

Brusselitis is, sadly, not the only affliction to be found in the West. The atmosphere in which not only this but also comparable international and domestic myopias are nourished is, and can only be, that of what we may call a politically *déraciné* section of the intelligentsia. Academe, in particular, is still a hothouse for poisonous exotica. Nor does all this remain on campus: It is projected through powerful foundations, and through governmental cliques and committees.

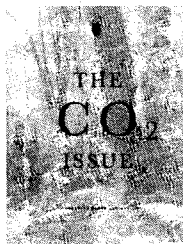
Some university departments indeed are no longer providing education in any recognized sense of the word. There are now scores of thousands of professors, teachers, long-term

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"Who are you going to believe? Me or your own lying eyes?" Richard Pryor once quipped. Many in the Clinton Administration and professional environmental community seek to convince you it is time for the world's governments to tax, cap, and constrain human industrial evolution because of CO₂ emissions.

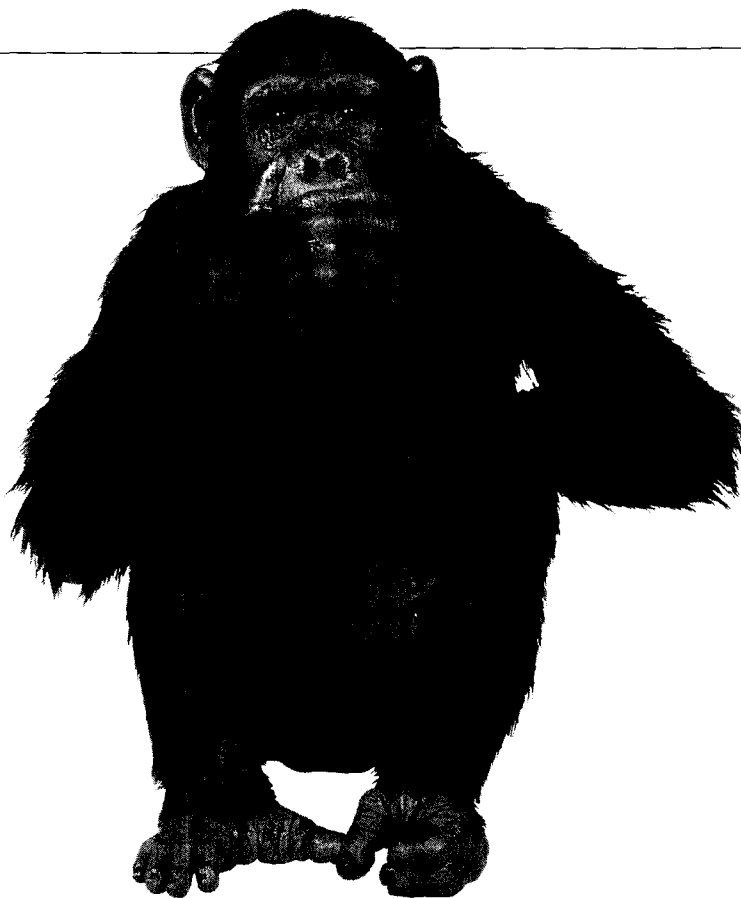
Theirs is a negative vision rooted in sophisticated and



expensive (but flawed and flux-adjusted) computer models. They promote a tainted ground-based temperature record. Fortunately, satellite readings bolstered by weather balloon radiosondes and analysis of marine nighttime temperature show us their vision of apocalypse is flawed. The biosphere is more productive and there is little detectable warming save for moderate nighttime, winter warming in northern latitudes.

"It ain't over till it's over," Yogi Berra also said. Informed citizens, acting out of enlightened self-interest, can stop the rush to UN regulation of all fossil fuel production and use. Optimistic voices must be heard. Our information is available on-line. Call us toll-free and we'll send you our brochure *The CO₂ Issue*. Greening Earth Society is funded by consumer-owned utility companies, concerned citizens, and Western Fuels Association.

YOU CAN OBSERVE A LOT JUST BY WATCHING — YOGI BERRA



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"students" who are sometimes even concerned to deny the validity of knowledge, but almost always to portray the Western pluralist order as an object of obloquy. Thus we have to cope with the effect of such excess miseducation in producing an ill-informed caste with an entirely unjustified sense of its splendor and its mission. We need reforms that would at least ensure that universities, to say nothing of primary and secondary schools, are not encouraged to promote agenda other than knowledge and judgment.

Even those in official positions feel obliged to appease obnoxious trends, including the absurd, and indisputably militarily deleterious, feminization of the infantry. The political class, and the political leadership itself, is infected by the surrounding atmosphere, even to the extent of underestimating the real dangers of the still very troubled world, and the necessity of preserving the capacity to cope with them. Nor are reasonable policies in themselves difficult to understand, or repulsive to the peoples of the Western tradition. The problem lies elsewhere—in the vulnerability to unreason of much of the intellectual class and to such of the political class as is influenced, or diverted, by them.

IN VICTORY, SURRENDER

The dismaying results of this surrender are not far to seek: an effectively disintegrative "Europeanism"; an anti-Western intelligentsia, on both sides of the Atlantic, that actively or indirectly opposes, or sabotages, the defense developments required to deter the various nuclear and other threats to us and to the world; and, in the same circles, mindsets tending to disrupt or demoralize the pluralist social and political order.

In fact, in spite of the lessons of the Cold War, there is still a sentiment opposed, in knee-jerk fashion, to the whole idea of adequate defense. Moreover, this is, if anything, exacerbated by the pressures that sane American policy faces from an international establishmentarianism: a resurgence of what one thinks of (remember the Cold War) as Stockholm-style self-congratulatory holier-than-thou attitudes to American plans to defend America (and the rest of the world), and to American reluctance to assent to fine-sounding treaties that many other signatories would not dream of observing. And this "international pressure" is used by the myopic in the United States itself as an argument for debilitation.

It may be said, and rightly, that we have always suffered from these or similar disadvantages, and that they can be overcome, or at least prevented from exercising their full potential of harm. But how? And what can we say that is more positive?

First, that the American political stratum proper is by no means dominated, even if over-influenced, by the chattering classes. And the press proper, even if to some degree skewed, is on the whole more adult, more sane, than the intelligentsia per se. Furthermore, this cheering picture is—perhaps surprisingly—truer of the United States than of its allies, or supposed allies. Second, there is no overpowering *objective* reason that the West should not remain the global center of power, with all that this implies for a future world in which pluralist arrangements and peaceful evolution prevail. But we can hardly forget, or fail to face, the internal problems of the West, as well as, and with implications for, its global confrontations. **NR**

DEMOCRACY

... IF YOU CAN KEEP IT

JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL

THE current president of Poland, Aleksander Kwasniewski, was until quite recently a pro-Soviet apparatchik and collaborator of General Jaruzelski. But now, when he is addressing assembled fellow citizens in the capital, he makes his speech in Ronald Reagan Square. He faces a towering, massive edifice in the Stalinist style, which served as headquarters of the Polish Communist Party. Today it is the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

Politics consists not only of the law of unintended consequences, but of the law of improbability. Things that fifteen years ago no futuristic-minded filmmaker would have dared offer the public have become true, not to say commonplace. In front of our eyes, history has taken a shortcut so full of ironies that there is good reason to be optimistic about the future of democracy. The 20th century, it is tempting to believe, has concluded in the widespread victory of democracy, or, at the very least, in a general reorientation of mankind in the direction of democracy.

Let us be optimistic, by all means, but on one condition: that we steadily bear in mind that the law of improbability can also work itself out in some contrary sense, and at extreme speed too. At the close of the 19th century, nobody could conceivably have predicted that the 20th would belong to totalitarianism. The term itself, not yet devised, pointed to a reality that humanity had never experienced in the course of its history.

The arithmetic that divides the passing of time into segments of a hundred years is artificial, and best left to one side. In the perspective of history as it has actually occurred, the 19th century, as has often been noted, lasted from 1815 to 1914, and the 20th from 1919 to 1989.

In the wake of revolutionary and Napoleonic upheavals, Europe after 1815 was effectively stable for the rest of the century. Wars, revolutions, and coups there might have been, but democracy was set on a course that steadily gathered pace throughout the nations of Europe: the incremental adoption of the universal franchise, trade-union rights for the workforce, the origins of the welfare state, freedom of expression and recourse to the law, cultural independence, guarantees for the individual against an arbitrary state, literacy for the masses and the spread of education. Already in operation, and relayed via Tocqueville, American democra-

Mr. Revel, the philosopher and journalist, is the author of, among many other books, *The Totalitarian Temptation*. This article was translated from the French by David Pryce-Jones.

cy was held up as the model for Europe. The former colonies of Latin America won their liberty, however chaotic the next stages of their history were to prove. Even Czarist Russia was slowly liberalizing. Asked in 1900 for an opinion about the future, an impartial observer would have had every reason to predict that the century ahead would see the peaceful extension of the whole process of democratization.

It did not. The years after the First War gave rise to regimes of a type not previously known, under the general description of "totalitarian": Bolshevism in 1917, Fascism in 1922, Nazism in 1933. When we say "of a type not previously known," we mean that a regime may very well be undemocratic without being totalitarian. European monarchies in the age of absolutism, Greek city-states under the rule of a tyrant, the governments of Italian cities in the Renaissance—all were authoritarian, but not totalitarian. In every one of these political structures, economic life was largely autonomous, and supreme authority was subject to a variety of checks and balances, whether feudal, regional, religious, legal, or university-related. Scientific research, the pursuit of philosophy, and artistic and literary creativity were matters of free choice, almost without qualification. Each society went its own way.

In contrast, a totalitarian regime by definition is a cast-iron monopoly of politics, the economy, and the culture, for the benefit of a self-appointed oligarchy. The operation of such a monopoly requires ideologically driven machinery for suppressing individual liberty and obliterating culture. All totalitarianisms mean the rule of an Idea. This ideological and utopian substructure explains one of the strangest characteristics of all totalitarianisms: the liquidation of their own people. The moment that their Idea proves to be impossibly unrealistic in practice, the oligarchs put the failure down to "unhealthy" elements, at fault on account of either race or class, and they then set about "purging" millions of innocent people who are not even political opponents.

IDEOLOGY, DEAD AND ALIVE

Because no futurologist at the start of the century could ever have imagined that "totalitarian" regimes would appear in Europe—and in most of Asia and in some Latin American countries as well—it seems unwise to take for granted that the breakup of Communism after 1989 will lead inexorably to the spread of the market economy everywhere, and to democracy as the globe's sole political system. Such a deduction might seem a certainty in the logic of things, but the progress of the 20th century is evidence that logic may not be the principal motor of history.

This was the reason that, in my book *Democracy Against Itself* (1993), I took a cautious position in the face of an optimism that seemed to me excessive and far too euphoric. Some of the formerly Communist countries have indeed taken steps down the path to economic, political, and cultural freedom, but others—above all Russia—have not succeeded in tearing themselves loose from the consequences of the Communist past. Russia still remains under the thumb of the oligarchs of the former nomenklatura. Agriculture, com-

pletely destroyed by Stalin and his successors under the "scientific" guidance of Lysenko, has been unable to revive. The rule of law scarcely exists. The market economy is thriving only in its mafia variant, which was already in place during the Soviet period, though unacknowledged. It would seem that escaping the consequences of Communism is harder than escaping Communism itself.

In countries that no longer are Communist, or, like China, are in the process of throwing off Communism, ideology may be dead, but practices deriving from it seem almost beyond eradication. In nations that never were Communist, by contrast, it is ideology itself that has gained a new lease on life. One feature marking the decade from 1990 to 2000 is the immense effort and unbelievable ingenuity displayed by the international Left in democratic countries, to avoid drawing lessons from the failure of Communism. True, most Western Communist parties have vanished or become marginal, changing their names and their doctrines; and Socialist and social-democratic parties have shifted towards the center, accepting the market economy, privatizing what was nation-

**The progress of the 20th century
is evidence that logic may not be
the principal motor of history.**

alized, and freeing exchange rates. But ideological debate still remains dominated by opponents of capitalism and the market, even in countries like the United States and Britain where the Communist Party was always tiny and politically negligible. The urban guerrillas who took to the streets against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in December 1999 showed that protest against globalization is founded on anti-capitalist polemics drawn straight from the purest Marxism. The ideological success of these informal groups and organizations, quasi-religious as much as they are non-governmental, draws its inspiration from a generalized hatred of the open society. The media in Europe by and large sympathized with the slogans of the rioters and presented the failure of the Seattle meeting as an outcome to be welcomed. Here is a striking paradox: The lesson that some powerful opinionmakers appear to have drawn from the implosion of Communism is that it is capitalism that stands condemned, and more widely liberalism, as it used to be called in the traditional European political vocabulary, carrying the implication of private property and political and economic freedom.

The totalitarian phenomenon is not to be understood without making allowance for the thesis that some important part of every society consists of people who actively want tyranny: either to exercise it themselves or—much more mysteriously—to submit to it. Democracy will therefore always remain at risk. Never will history see the end of the totalitarian temptation, for it is rooted, not in some socio-historical determinism, but in human nature: Marx can provide us no explanation for Marxism.

NR

W A R

AT ARMS

ELIOT A. COHEN

It is an odd irony that one of the last wars in this, perhaps man's bloodiest century, was fought in a cockpit of perhaps its bloodiest continent, Europe, with fewer military casualties than civilian ones, and, indeed, on one side no combat casualties at all. That war was, of course, the conflict in Kosovo. Serbia, the source and locus of repeated wars even before the World War of 1914–18, had seen horrific slaughter in the first half of the century, as its young (and old) men went off to do battle with Turks, Austrians, Bulgarians, Italians, and Germans, as well as one another. They had done so in uniformed masses and serried ranks, carrying rifles and under the covering fire of artillery barrages. By and large, Serbia fought its wars as Europeans had fought them since the middle of the 19th century—as conscript warriors in mass armies. Yet Serbia succumbed, in the Kosovo war, to a kind of military power too fantastic to imagine in 1900, in which aircraft barely visible to the naked eye dropped bombs or fired missiles so exquisitely precise that they were aimed at—and succeeded in hitting—particular windows on selected floors of high-rise buildings; in which bridges crumpled up and electrical power grids dissolved in a shower of sparks; and in which commanders, buried deep in bunkers, had to fear the arrival of a bomb that could count the slabs of concrete it had penetrated before exploding next to them.

Has warfare changed beyond all recognition? Certainly, the kind of war that the United States fought in Kosovo begins to exemplify what the cognoscenti call “the revolution in military affairs,” or RMA. This bit of technical shorthand refers primarily to two technological developments in combat: the power of instantly available, networked information, and the pervasiveness of precision firepower. Satellites beaming fresh pictures of targets to pilots in jet aircraft, tanks communicating their locations to computerized command posts, generals peering remotely over the shoulders of company commanders through the cameras of orbiting unmanned aircraft—these are all phenomena of today, not the military dreams of tomorrow. This is a style of warfare that is, in some respects, unstoppable. It is a form in which the United States leads all others, because of the sheer size and sophistication of the American defense establishment—aided by a budget larger than that of the next four powers combined—and the amazing vigor of its information-driven economy.

The revolution-in-military-affairs militaries have at least two characteristics other than the technological wizardry of

sensors, missiles, and networks. They are, increasingly, professional. The mass army, which dominated military organizations from the French Revolution on, disappeared in the United States in the 1970s, and in Europe twenty years later. Around the world, even armies with growing budgets and substantial security threats are deliberately shrinking themselves. Conscription, which shaped domestic politics as well as war, has come under pressure as a military institution; even the French, who invented the draft in its modern form, have abandoned it. The demise of the draft, and with it the mass army, has occurred because the rise of technological quality has, at last, trumped quantity. Thirty years ago, if an American officer had been offered a hypothetical choice between commanding a battalion of fifty American tanks or a division of three hundred of their Iraqi counterparts in a fair fight, he would, at least, have hesitated; today the choice would be no choice at all, so great is the discrepancy in the quality of the weapons of war and the men who wield them. The American battalion would slice the Iraqi division to bits.

The decline of conscription poses great challenges to armed forces whose self-understanding rests upon the draft, and to societies in which conscription has helped define citizenship and manhood alike. Israel is the major case in point. Even in countries like the United States, however, the transition from a mass-army mentality is not quite complete, as

**The new military has not created
such a preponderance of might on
our side that war has become
too difficult to look attractive.**

witness the difficult relations between the U.S. Army and the National Guard, or the ponderousness of the Army's requirements for conducting expeditionary operations abroad.

An even deeper challenge is posed by the second great characteristic of the RMA militaries: their extraordinary sensitivity to casualties. For many and subtle reasons, these organizations are unwilling to take the kinds of losses in routine military operations that were common only thirty or forty years ago. A single death in combat looks like a lapse in military leadership or skill; a dozen appear a national scandal; several hundred are a catastrophe. It is not clear that this sensitivity arises from society (after all, elites increasingly view soldiers the way they view police officers and firefighters—as worthy people paid to go into harm's way) so much as from the military itself. But whatever its cause, this reluctance to lose men (and women) in military operations is pervasive and sometimes crippling, and it affects Australians and Israelis as much as it does Americans.

In this and other respects, then, the RMA militaries and their way of war have distinct weaknesses, which may be exploited by wily opponents. For it is not the case that the

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rise of the new military has created such a preponderance of might on the side of the United States and its allies that war has become too difficult to look attractive. Some countries, such as China, will attempt to carve off pieces of the revolution in military affairs for their own purposes—in the case of China, by developing large missile forces that can hold at bay the casualty-averse Americans while intimidating and coercing a country like Taiwan. More broadly, the older form of warfare—the mass-army way of war—still persists in some parts of the world, particularly those in which the United States is not expected to intervene. The current Russian onslaught in Chechnya, in all of its horror and brute force, represents the old way of war at its cruelest. The barely noticed but bloody border struggles of Ethiopia and Eritrea, the war in central Africa, the infantry and artillery battles in Kashmir, or the only somewhat more visible contests of Croats and Serbs, have been of this type. This was the kind of war that Saddam Hussein expected when he awaited the American onslaught in 1991: a bloody grapple in the mud, in which an edge in weapons or numbers would count for only so much, and victory might well go to the man least willing to concede defeat. But the mass-army way of war is on the way out.

Far more durable is a different kind of war: the virtual war of weapons of mass destruction that sets the conditions for, and defines the limits of, real conflict. Saddam's scramble for biological and nuclear weapons even (or rather, particularly) after the Gulf War reflects his belief that the ownership of such devices may buy some protection from both the unlimited struggle of the twentieth century's world wars and the attentions of high-technology opponents. The attractiveness of weapons of mass destruction has grown as the development of RMA militaries makes conventional conflict look less appealing.

What the rules of the game will be when this kind of conflict becomes real, however, we do not know. There have been two substantial wars between nuclear powers: the barely known border fighting between China and the Soviet Union in the late 1960s, and the Kargil war of 1999 between India and Pakistan. There may be others before too long. Eventually, the odds would suggest, someone will use biological or nuclear weapons (chemicals are not really weapons of mass destruction, having geographically limited effects) in anger. At that point, the rules of the third major kind of war—mass-destruction war—will change, in ways perhaps too difficult to anticipate. It is, however, safe to predict that new kinds of mobilization for war will occur, as societies hurry

to create defenses against the more obvious forms of attack. The logic of preemption will almost surely take hold, and attacks on an opponent's leadership, in hopes of paralyzing its ability to strike, will be accepted.

There is yet a fourth kind of war that will continue to stalk the planet early in the next millennium. One may call it, in the words of a character in *The Centurions*, Jean Lartéguy's superb novel about the French war in Algeria, "termite war." It is the murky war of the guerrilla and terrorist, the kind waged with such success by men as different as the Taliban, the Irish Republican Army, Hezbollah, and Somali warlords. It is the kind of war that RMA militaries abhor, because their technical advantage appears far less useful than it does against the plodding armies of traditional mass-warfare states, and because in such wars a trickle of casualties is unavoidable.

The potential of termite war has grown with the spread of some quite simple technologies—very effective high explosives, cheap automatic weapons, and antitank or anti-aircraft missiles—and with the ease of international travel and communications. It has fatally undermined states as diverse as Colombia and Afghanistan, and it represents a threat against which there are very few successful counters. America's withdrawal from Somalia, the first Russian retreat from Chechnya, Britain's opening of peace talks with representatives of the IRA, Israel's announced willingness to withdraw unilaterally



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from southern Lebanon—all represented the triumph of termite war. To be sure, in such wars many of the tactical victories go to the more sophisticated side, and the costs borne by the hapless populations in whose midst the wars take place, and on whose behalf the guerrilla-terrorists nominally fight, are enormous. But barring massive, prolonged, and harsh military responses (the Turks against the Kurds are a good example), the termites seem to have the edge. Paradoxically, against such opponents, the bludgeon of the mass army may serve better, if more brutally, than the rapier of the RMA military.

Thus, four kinds of conflict—RMA high tech, the waning mass-army battle, weapon-of-mass-destruction war, and termite struggle—will persist into the next century. But to what end? Clausewitz, the greatest thinker on war, insisted that the most important aspect of any war is its politics. If that is so, what will men fight about in the next century?

Clearly, some kinds of purposes are on the way out, much like some of the forms of warfare themselves. Secular messianic ideologies (Communism and Fascism) will no longer

feed war, as they did from 1918 through at least the Vietnam War. Neither will the great national rivalries of Western Europe, which nearly led to the suicide of that great civilization in the first half of the century. Similarly, the complex struggles that brought to an end the European colonial order are well and truly over. Wars of state-building may still occur, but not in the environment of contest between West and East, or between an imperial past and a future of multiple sovereignties.

Nationalism is altogether more durable as a motivation for struggle, but the end of the mass army will make wars of national ambition different than in the past; they will be a kind of giant spectator sport, conducted not by masses of draftees and reservists shuffling off, arms swinging, to the front, but by national champions (one might almost say, combat stars and celebrities) in the forms of pilots and commandos. The kind of sacrifice and effort that lit national conflagrations will no longer exist; nationalist bellicosity, then, may come and go, flaming up in spurts, rather than lighting a fierce, near-inextinguishable burning.

Thucydides' explanation of the causes of war—fear, interest, and honor—will continue to hold, although they will take different forms than in the past. By the middle of the 19th century it had already become difficult to imagine war as merely a knob by which cold-eyed aristocratic statesmen adjusted the workings of that intricate mechanism of international politics, the balance of power. By the 21st century it is inconceivable. Fear of the great powers will, no doubt, persist, and one can well imagine some states wishing to see others reduced in vigor by a judicious letting of blood. But overt warfare among the great powers will be a rare event. This may owe less to the general progress of mankind than to the dominance of the United States and its liberal democratic allies, who are likely neither to fight one another nor to exercise such a tyranny over other states as to elicit a violent response. Other kinds of fear will persist, however, particularly if states or non-state actors actually use weapons

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of mass destruction. Statesmen acting less from an abstract fear of the expansion of hostile military power than from anxiety about the ghastly consequences of its use, may provoke small-scale conflicts that, though not dignified by the name of war, will nonetheless yield a harvest of destruction and death.

Interest, in the sense of ambition for gain, seems least plausible as a motive for war. There will be exceptions, of course, particularly when it comes to natural resources such as oil and natural gas in the Persian Gulf, or, possibly, in Central and Southeast Asia. Still, national gain will, by and large, be measured by economic growth, and neither raw materials nor extent of national territory nor even, necessarily, numbers of subjects count as the raw ingredients of power in the ways they once did.

Which leaves honor, the most durable, as Donald Kagan has reminded us, of the motives for war. There we have a source of conflict that may well grow over time. The understandably prickly national self-esteem of states on the way down or on the way up (Russia and China, most notably) has already led to some wild threats, and even some wild deeds. The plausibility of autonomy on the part of ethnic and reli-

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gious groups—and the quest for independence is, in some measure, a claim on regard and esteem—has grown, as the state system has continued to add new members, while the dominance of the great states would appear to have diminished. The Information Age causes accidents and insults (the unintentional U.S. bombing of the Chinese embassy in Kosovo being a particularly acute example) to be magnified at home and abroad. Pride, self-regard, and self-assertion are all likely to increase now that the icefield that was the Cold War international system has melted.

In this last observation lies a great danger. The end of the Cold War led many to think that war was, finally, on its way to obsolescence as an international institution. It is not. It has shifted locales and means, styles and modes, but it has not gone away. And if fear and pride more than interest will motivate states and non-states to use violence to pursue their ends, there is cause for worry. The fearful and the proud, far more than the coldly calculating and conniving, are likely to stumble into wars out of stubbornness, or misunderstanding, or sheer willfulness, surprising themselves and others as they do. The wars of 1914–18 and 1939–45, which so much shaped this last century, had hung in dark clouds over world politics for years before the storms broke. In the next century, the storms may seem to come out of cloudless skies, in fairest weather.

NR

THE JEWS

STILL HERE— AND MORE

NORMAN PODHORETZ

HOW odd/Of God/To choose/The Jews,” wrote a British wag named William Norman Ewer in a little jingle often attributed to Hilaire Belloc (and given the sly touch of malice concealed beneath the whimsy, it was all but inevitable that there should have been responses in kind, the best of which came from one Cecil Browne: “But not so odd/As those who choose/A Jewish God/But spurn the Jews”). Still, what could Ewer do? As (presumably) a believing Christian, he had no choice but to accept what the Bible told him; and the Bible told him that God had indeed chosen the Jews. There have also been theologians (Friedrich Schleiermacher, for example) who thought it more than odd that God should have bestowed His special favor upon *any* one people of all the peoples on earth, let alone the Jews: They called it a “scandal,” the “scandal of particularity.” Ewer and Schleiermacher were Christians, and I am a Jew; nevertheless I agree with both of them.

I also agree with Cecil Browne, but his riposte does not dispose of the issue. For surely it is odd that the Jewish people, with all their imperfections on their heads, richly documented in the Hebrew Bible itself, should have been singled out by God for this special privilege (though the often bitter fruits of that privilege sometimes led the beneficiaries to pray: “Dear God, please choose someone else for a change”). And just as surely there is something theologically scandalous in the idea that the one true God, the universal God, the God of all, should (to borrow an image from the prophet Jeremiah) have “married” a scraggly tribe only just freed from slavery and now wandering in the desert.

About a thousand years later, God said through Jeremiah that He remembered the “love” with which His new bride followed Him through the barren wastes in those early days of their marriage. But the Book of Exodus presents a less idyllic picture, of a people full of shrewish complaint against Him and ever ready to rebel against His Law. Which makes it even more “odd,” and more of a “scandal,” that He should nevertheless have chosen such a people to serve as the instrument by which that Law would be revealed to the whole world.

Yet I have often thought (a little mischievously, I admit) that if it is hard to make logical or theological sense out of this oddity, this scandal, it begins to seem perfectly reasonable

Mr. Podhoretz, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, was for 35 years editor-in-chief of *Commentary* and is now its editor-at-large. His current book is *Ex-Friends*, and his next book, *My Love Affair with America*, will appear in July.

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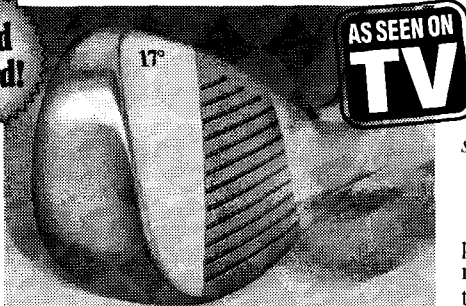
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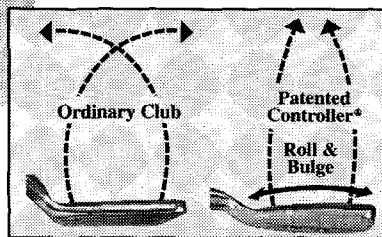
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when taken as an empirical proposition. For consider. All the great powers and principalities of antiquity—the Assyrians and the Babylonians and the Egyptians and the Persians and the Romans—who at one point or another conquered the Land of Israel and then outlawed the religious practices of its Jewish inhabitants, or executed some and banished others, have crumbled to dust.

Having outlasted all these mighty empires by creating ways of surviving statelessness, the Jews then remained alive as an identifiable people for another two thousand years: in spite of persecution by Christians and Muslims; in spite of forced conversions on pain of death; in spite of the murderous rampages that periodically broke out against them; and in spite of further expulsions from countries like Spain and England in which they had temporarily been granted refuge.

In another of those countries, and in our very own time, there even arose a tyrant who set out to achieve a “final solution” of “the Jewish problem.” His technique was much more direct than any that had been employed before. He simply murdered as many individual embodiments of that “problem” as his power could reach, which turned out to be a full third of the 18 million of them who were still around by the early decades of the twentieth century.

Meanwhile, in yet another country, yet another tyrant was doing his best to make it impossible for the more than 3 million Jews still residing in his domains to practice their religion or maintain any other ties to their ancient traditions. And we know now that only Stalin’s death in 1953 prevented him from adopting even more extreme measures to push the still “unsolved” Jewish problem closer to its final solution.

Yet all this, too, failed, and the Jews, though much diminished in numbers and grievously wounded in spirit, were once more still here as an identifiable people, while Hitler and Stalin and the empires they built crumbled into the same ignominious dust as the long line of their predecessors.

EMPIRICALLY PLAUSIBLE

Still here? No, more than that. After nearly two full millennia during which they had lived or died, been tolerated or persecuted, on the sufferance and at the whim of the regimes under whose rule they found themselves, the Jews once again had a state of their own, on the land from which they had originally been driven into an exile so lengthy that it became for them a general touchstone (“as long as the exile,” they would say of anything that seemed endless).

In addition to the new State of Israel, there was America, to which a little over a century ago Jews began fleeing by the millions from two great modern principalities that have also since disappeared—the Austro-Hungarian empire of the

Hapsburgs and the Russian empire of the Czars. These Jewish immigrants called America the “*goldene medinah*,” the golden land, and they were right. To be sure, there was no “gold on the streets,” as some of them had imagined, which meant that they had to struggle, and struggle hard. But there were things more precious than gold here—there was freedom and there was opportunity. Under those conditions, and hampered by much less virulent forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination than Jews had previously grown accustomed to contending with, the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these immigrants flourished to an extent unprecedented in the experience of their people.

Thus it was that even before the remnant of one segment of the Jewish people had returned to its ancestral home, another (and at the time even larger) portion had found another home in a new place and a new world such as they had never discovered in all their forced wanderings throughout the centuries over the face of the earth.

The more one contemplates this most improbable of all human histories, the more it seems resistant to any rational explanation, and the less one is able to avoid resorting to a word like “miraculous” or seeing the “finger of God” at work here. In the face of the empirical evidence, what other hypothesis even begins to be worth entertaining or testing? To Reason, it may be “odd” that God chose the Jews, and to Theology it may be a “scandal.” But—irony of ironies—from a scientific point of view, the proposition certainly seems to stand up.

Why then are the Jews everywhere so worried? Why is there so much anxiety over a new “Jewish problem,” the problem of “Jewish continuity,” that Jews themselves, as opposed to their enemies, have brought on their heads? A flippant answer might be that the Jews are always worried: It is an element of their character as a people, and has been since the beginning. True enough. But then again, there has always been plenty for the Jews to worry about, and despite so many outwardly reassuring signs, they have plenty to worry about today as their fourth millennium of recorded history reaches its conclusion, coinciding with the end of the second of Christianity, the religion they spawned and rejected.

GROUNDWORK FOR ANXIETY

The worry begins with demographics. Before Hitler, there were, again, approximately 18 million Jews scattered throughout the world. By the time he was through, there were only about 12 million left, nearly half of whom (some 5 million) lived in the United States. But it has turned out that, where “Jewish continuity” is concerned, freedom and equality, though infinitely preferable to persecution and discrimination, can take a toll of their own. As Irving Kristol



Moses, as depicted by Michelangelo

Alinari/Art Resource N.Y.

has said, the threat to Jews from Christians in America today comes not, as in the past, from the wish to oppress or even convert them but from the wish to marry their sons and daughters. This wish has been fulfilled to the point where the intermarriage rate has risen by some estimates to over 50 percent. The children of these marriages sometimes regard themselves as Jews; and if their mothers are Jewish, they are also regarded as such under Jewish law. But this is cold comfort if they do not act upon it, and most do not. They tend to drift away, and their own children drift even further.

A striking concrete example: In the cabinet of President Jimmy Carter, there were three men—Harold Brown, James Schlesinger, and Michael Blumenthal—each of whom had two Jewish parents. Among them they fathered fourteen children, all of whom were raised as Christians (or at least not as Jews). In other words, from six Jewish grandparents stemmed more than twice as many descendants who would in all probability be lost to the Jewish people.

To exacerbate this situation, the Jewish women who marry Jewish men rarely multiply so fruitfully. Instead of having four or five children, they have (as these things are so curiously measured by demographers) about one and a half. This means, quite simply, that they are not reproducing themselves. And that means, in turn, that the number of Jews in America is and will go on shrinking, while the Jewish community on average will grow older and older until it could die out altogether.

To this ominous demographic augury must be added the effects of assimilation into a welcoming American culture that does not even demand conversion as the price of full participation. Here we have another sharp contrast with Europe, when becoming a Christian once was, as the great nineteenth-century German-Jewish poet Heinrich Heine remarked of his own conversion, the Jew's only "passport" into European civilization.

In America, then, what the Jews have to worry about is that they will eventually disappear through a combination of intermarriage and assimilation. And much the same is true of the even smaller and less important Jewish communities in other countries.

THREATS TO ISRAEL

But what about Israel? Contrary to even the most visionary expectations, more Jews now live there than in the United States, thanks mainly to a very large influx from the former Soviet Union. The Jewish state is militarily powerful, and economically it is very prosperous, relative to the Arab countries surrounding it. To make matters even more encouraging, those countries, which once pledged themselves to wipe Israel off the map, and went to war five times for that purpose, now speak of coexisting with it. A "peace process" is also underway with the Palestinians that is leading inexorably to a state of their own and—many expect—a wholly benign "final solution" to the new "Jewish problem" that the founding of Israel in 1948 created in the Middle East. Those who entertain this glowing expectation look to the fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah's vision of the lion lying down with the lamb; or, as the former prime minister of

Israel, Shimon Peres, puts it in the crasser terms of contemporary utopianism, everyone in the region will now march to the slogan, "Make money, not war."

If this were a complete picture, or even within its limits an accurate one, Israel would present Jews with a lot less to worry about than America does. But all is by no means so entirely at ease in Zion, or so roseate in the Middle East. Domestically, Israel suffers from an unresolved conflict between the religious and the secular portions of the population that is perhaps even more intense and bitter than the general "culture war" that resembles it here.

This conflict has spilled over into America through the controversy over who is to be considered a Jew: Many American Jews are infuriated at rabbinic rulings in Israel according to which their grandchildren—the issue of all those intermarriages—are not, legally speaking, Jews. Other American Jews are even more enraged at the refusal of the various Israeli Orthodox communities to acknowledge the legitimacy of mar-

Israeli children are being taught to look at their own country through the eyes of their worst enemies.

riages and conversions when performed by the Reform and Conservative rabbis on whom most American Jews rely, when they bother resorting to a rabbi at all.

The sages of the Talmud attributed the destruction of an earlier Jewish commonwealth to the hatred among its inhabitants; if so, the stage has been set for another such catastrophe.

Nor is this the only danger from within to the continued existence of Israel. From the moment of its birth, Israel has endured a state of siege punctuated every few years by an outbreak of armed hostilities. No wonder, then, that its inhabitants have grown war-weary and that their yearning for peace has intensified. Out of this has come wishful thinking about the intentions of the Arabs, and out of it too has grown a "post-Zionist" school of thought within the universities, among writers and other artists, and in the media.

According to this new school of thought (eerily reminiscent of the revisionist historians of America who came to the fore during the Cold War), Israel was founded on injustice to the Palestinian inhabitants of the land, and has continued to be largely responsible for the war the Arab world has been fighting against it since its establishment about fifty years ago.

Textbooks are now incorporating this point of view, which is to say that Israeli children are being taught to look at their own country through the eyes of their worst enemies. And one of the things they see through those eyes is that it would be better if Israel ceased being a Jewish state and were to become instead "a state of all its citizens." This phrase is a euphemism for a country in which Jews would become a minority. But in such a country their own security would surely be endangered. They would also be deprived of the political power to keep the primary promise of Zionism,

which was, and is, to provide a refuge for Jews fleeing persecution in other lands.

Meanwhile—with so momentous a change going on in Israel, and in spite of Jewish illusions to the contrary—nothing has changed among the Arabs but their tactics. After five unsuccessful attempts, they have decided that for the time being a direct military assault is unlikely to be successful. They have also come to realize that they were alienating potential supporters in the West in the years when they openly expressed their intention to destroy Israel and drive its Jewish inhabitants “into the sea.”

They have therefore adopted a “strategy of phases”—prescribing as a first step negotiations to set up a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, from which, as a second step, operations of ever increasing scope can be launched until the territory still held by Israel is reclaimed from the Jews.

In line with this strategy, they speak reassuringly of peace and coexistence when addressing Western audiences and even Israelis. Among themselves, however, the Arabs (including Egypt and Jordan, which have actually signed peace treaties with Israel) still use the language of *jihād*, of holy war. Far from pursuing peace, they still look upon the Jewish state as an abomination. At the opportune moment—so they vow to one another, in their speeches, their newspapers, their books, and their textbooks—they will set forth upon their *jihād* against an Israel diminished in size and weakened by its own moral and intellectual surrender to their idea of the only just way to solve this latest mutation of the “Jewish problem.”

‘A STIFF-NECKED PEOPLE’

And yet, and yet, countervailing forces are also in play. In America, something no one ever predicted has come to pass: the rise of a significant number of young Jews who are becoming religious. When William F. Buckley Jr. was an undergraduate, God may have been banished from Yale, but today He is being brought back there—and to Harvard, and to Princeton, and to Columbia—by Jewish kids who have become strictly and unabashedly Orthodox and insist on observing the commandments even as they knock off straight-A averages in their secular courses.

Nor is this resurgence of Orthodoxy confined to the universities: To everyone’s amazement, it has manifested itself all over America, not just among relatively recent immigrants or the products of a religious upbringing, but among American-born returnees to the fold who were never all that much a part of it in the first place. They constitute only a small minority of the Jewish community as a whole (indeed, only 30 percent of Jewish respondents to a recent Gallup poll, as compared with twice that proportion among Americans in general, said that religion was “very important” in their daily lives). But who knows what this Orthodox “saving remnant” may accomplish to confound the demographers?

I wish I could be as sanguine about Israel. But I am too disheartened by what the novelist Aharon Megged, one of the few dissenters among Israeli intellectuals from the “post-Zionist” ethos, calls the “moral suicide” that this ethos is encouraging and promoting. On the other hand, in the

Bible, God Himself tells Moses that the Jews are a “stiff-necked people,” and it is on that stubbornness that I place my confidence in the continued existence of Israel.

Admittedly, God was not praising His chosen people when He described them as stiff-necked: He was, rather, denouncing them after they had rejected Him by building a golden calf. Even so, He allowed Moses to talk Him out of abandoning them to oblivion then and there with the argument that this would give the Egyptians a chance to say that He had brought them forth out of slavery “with evil intent.” Why then would He give the “Egyptians” of today the chance to say something not altogether dissimilar by permitting them to have their way with Israel?

And so, noting again that the evidence of four thousand years makes good empirical sense out of what in the abstract seems “odd” to Reason and a “scandal” to Theology, I believe that, in spite of anything and everything, the Jews will survive as a distinct people because God chose them and then commanded them in turn to “choose life” over death. Which is precisely what they have done for four thousand years; and it is by obstinately observing that commandment that they have perhaps been delivering precisely the message He singled them out to deliver to the whole of the human race. **NR**

LITERATURE

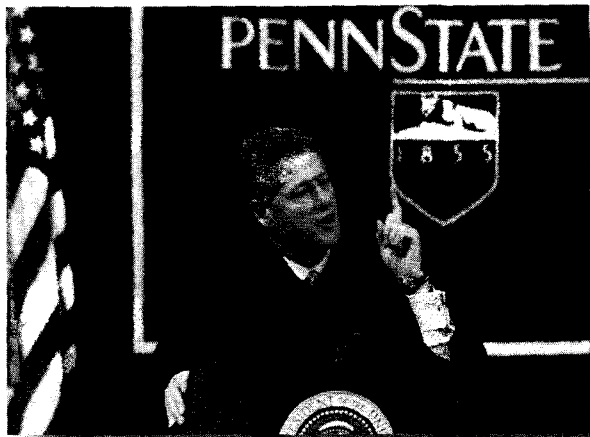
THE NEXT CHAPTER

SAUL BELLOW

WHEN I was young I was reluctant to discuss the future of the novel. I had already made plans to write fiction, and I was not about to undercut myself by discussing the death of the novel. But I am an octogenarian now and see no harm in going public with my views. It is possible that for a majority of readers the question of the survival of the novel is an empty one. It is the scholarly specialist who tells us that every form is born, ripens, ages, and finally has to be put down. The scholars and critics identify themselves with the great past of every form and speak with the authority of its best representatives. You can almost hear the voices of the Melvilles and the Henry Jameses laying down the law to a generation of upstarts.

In the earlier decades of the 20th century writers were less bossy. In putting my thoughts on these matters in order I went back to a straightforward little book by Ford Madox Ford called *The English Novel*. Ford, who fought in the trenches during the Great War (he was described by one of his contemporaries as a “lemony-pink, fleshy man”) tells us at

Mr. Bellow won the Nobel prize for literature in 1976. His forthcoming novel is *Ravelstein*.



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the outset that his remarks will “differ very widely from the conclusions arrived at by my predecessors in this field who have seldom themselves been imaginative writers, let alone novelists.” He is prepared to take a more modest line with the novelists he examines as well as with their readers. Those readers represent the common consciousness of their respective countries. The French, German, English, Russian, etc., readers have a collective familiarity with the facts of life as viewed by their novelist countrymen. They know the going gossip. Like Auden, Ford believed that gossip keeps the minds of a country “aerated.” So that even the highly respected “papers of record” find it necessary to report the sex gossip of prime ministers and presidents.

Ford tells us that the novel “supplies that cloud of human instances without which the soul feels unsafe in its adventures, and the normal mind fairly easily discerns what events or characters in its fugitive novels are meretricious in relation to life, however entertaining they may be as fiction.” Another way of putting it is that through the reading of novels we come to know others with an intimacy otherwise unfelt. As bookish children we were on familiar terms with a very large number of fictional persons. We knew their hopes,

**As bookish children we were
on familiar terms with a very large
number of fictional persons.
We knew their hopes, their habits,
and their thoughts.**

their habits, and their thoughts. Readers of my generation were on closer terms with the characters of Conrad's Captain MacWhirr, Dreiser's Sister Carrie, Lewis's Babbitt, or Lawrence's Lady Chatterley than with their own cousins or classmates. We had a clear view of these characters, and we were able to observe and know how they felt and what they were thinking. We learned how these people understood life, and became familiar with their manners and behavior.

In the early decades of this century of triumphant technics, intellectuals spoke of the mass-man and his inability to distinguish between the natural and the man-made. The mass-man thought that the electricity that lit his rooms was something like a free commodity resembling sunlight or tap water. An educated minority thought of reservoirs or generators. But as technology advanced the educated class were to become as ignorant as the mass-man. In my college days, we were taught that metabolism consisted of two processes, anabolism and catabolism. The use of such terms proved you to be an educated person. You needed only to learn the pass-words. My heart rhythm is now regulated by a pacemaker. Once a month it is checked over the phone by a technician several hundreds of miles away—somewhere in New Jersey. Computer chips seem to be running our lives.

On street corners one sometimes sees people apparently

staring into space. I am told that the lower lenses of their eyeglasses are programmed to give them up-to-the-minute readings of their Dow Jones holdings. People driving their cars lose control of the wheel as they make assignments on the cellular telephone. The Russian spy recently caught in Washington who seemed to be idling on a sunny park bench controlled the switch of a listening device that transmitted classified conversation in a federal building nearby. Minds like our own have broken through into a new technological realm. We haven't made it. This is the work of our cousins, sons, and nieces. We trust our lives to the aircraft they design. That we ourselves cannot fly them goes without saying. It goes without saying also that it is possible to manufacture goggles that allow you to follow your investments, but it makes one oddly despondent to think how great our reliance on electronic devices has become. We never did understand the physiology that sustained us, but that was one of the mysteries of nature, an altogether natural ignorance. But now the mystery has become technical. Because men have created it who should be capable of understanding it as well.

A very long time ago, when I was a teenager, I liked to think of myself as a future historian of culture. I read *The Magic Mountain* and said to myself, “Now that is for you.” I pored over John H. Randall's *The Making of the Modern Mind* and said, “This is your cup of tea.” I had found the connection between the world of high culture and the slums of Chicago.

I sometimes wonder whether I might not have been better off at M.I.T.

Just after the end of the War, when I began to contribute stories and articles to *The Partisan Review* and learned that I was now thought to be an intellectual, I decided that I was no such thing. To be an intellectual at mid century meant that you must be capable of arguing points of Marxist doctrine, and since so many people below 14th Street were also in analysis you could not get by without long days of psycho-analytic study. There was a rift—a gap, a gulf between the intellectuals and their contemporaries, the writers.

‘THAT CLOUD OF HUMAN INSTANCES’

A review essay by George Steiner on *The Arcades Project* of Walter Benjamin in the *Times Literary Supplement* for December 3, 1999, now claims my attention, because it is involved with the argument I am trying to develop. In Steiner's view the modern has given up its early claim to be systematic. Basic to modernism is that it is incomplete. Adorno has told us that “totality is the lie.” Of course truth must come first. Modern literature, writes Steiner, adopts a “poetics of the fragmentary, of fragments shored against the ruins”—every significant modern argument derives its *kashruth*, its rabbinic sanction, from T. S. Eliot. Next—Proust and Schoenberg, Ezra Pound and Musil are cited by Mr. Steiner as giants of Art who with their instinct for the genuine have embraced the convention of non-completion—“a deeper pressure against perfection,” Mr. Steiner says. By this he seems to mean that “perfection” should be sabotaged.

He goes on to tell us: “The accelerando and violence of recent history, the large-scale disappearance of the privileges of privacy, of silence, of leisure that underwrote the classic practice of reading and aesthetic response, the economics of

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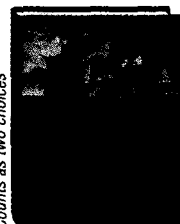
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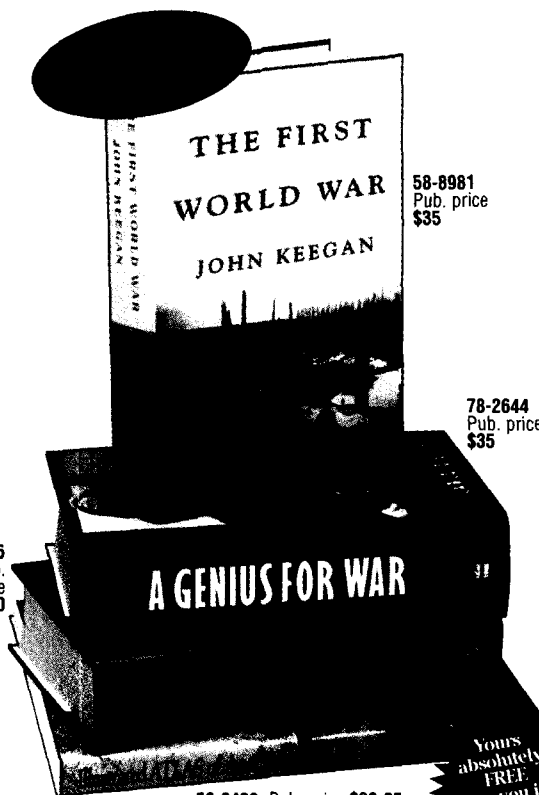


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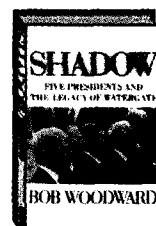
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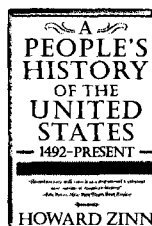
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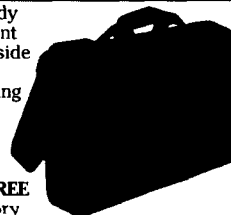


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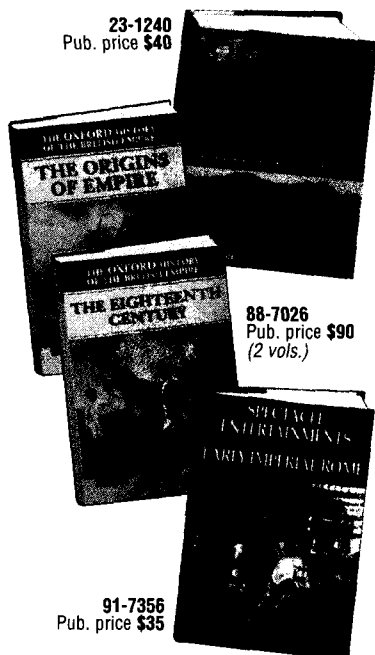


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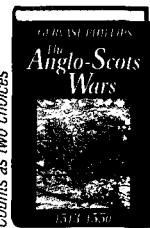
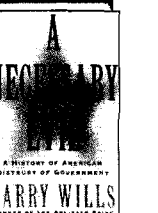
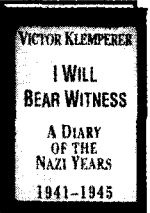
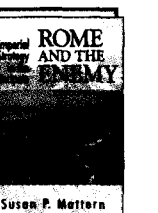
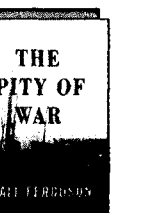


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the ephemeral, of the disposable and recyclable which fuel the mass consumption market, be it in the media or in the factory, militate against enactments of completion and totality."

I know very little about Benjamin. *The Arcades Project* arrived just the other day, and I shall try to set aside the first of the many hours it will take to read Benjamin's 1,073 pages. The man had a bitterly hard life, and reading Steiner's review makes you feel even more sympathetic towards him—"his deepening *misère*, what he clearly perceived as the failure of the *Front Populaire*." As Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Soviet Russia poured troops and war material into Spain, no one could possibly believe that the *Front Populaire* would survive. And what makes *misère* more effective than misery?

Are we required moreover to think of one vastly extended realm of art-criticism-intellectual activity-culture—a single sphere where all these things intermingle and touch and are shared somehow by the artists and by the intellectual collaborators of these artists as well? The latter are thought to be indispensable because they focus the light of the mind on every sort of problem. The intellectual appears as a gentle and sapient soul who is fully at home everywhere and indeed is indispensable. He is the artist's kissing-cousin. Or perhaps even a brother, as Aaron was to Moses. This is how Mr. Steiner seems to see the existence shared by intellectuals and artists. D. H. Lawrence maintained that "the business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe, at the living moment." A physicist might dismiss this as double-talk or mumbo-jumbo, but a novelist would class it as an attempt to express the personal uniqueness of the artist's perspective. A kind of personal natural phenomenology underlies Lawrence's assumption. Because this is universal, a reader will receive and trust the report of the perceiver. This was what Ford Madox Ford meant when he said that "the novel supplies that cloud of human instances without which the soul feels unsafe in its adventures." But this is not the case of an intellectual like Professor Steiner, who misses no opportunity to show his skill with the Baudelairean conjurer's handkerchief: "The resuscitation of the ephemeral, of the unconsidered, of the scorned, makes of the ragpicker a figuration of the Messianic. Of comparable significance is the *flâneur*, again a motif crucial in Baudelaire. . . . the *flâneur* subverts the utilitarian, deterministic programme of the city . . . Perennially the *chiffonnier* and the *flâneur* will cross paths with the prostitute. She too is essential to the cast. The pavements are her argosy. If the prostitute incarnates archetypal imaginations, of intimacies to be 'picked up,' she is also the emblematic player in the Marxist polemic on capitalist enslavement at its crassest, as well as in the Freudian narrative of middle-class libidinal angst and desire. . . ."

Nobody makes my case better than Professor Steiner himself when he cuts loose. He clutches Baudelaire and drags him around in a *pas de deux* over ground that he, Steiner, claims to have mastered in every historical detail. Can this jungle of allusions ever be reduced to order? I really can't say what the future of the novel is, but following Mr. Steiner's lead does not seem promising. A different dance is perhaps still possible.

NR

THE ARTS

TOWARD RECOVERY

PAUL JOHNSON

THERE has been something like a collapse of the arts in the 20th century—or so, I suspect, future historians will judge—and what we must look for, early in the Third Millennium, is a process of recovery. The whole of history teaches that men and women cannot live without art, and that art must be as good as they can make it. They were engaging in art long before they could write, perhaps even before they could communicate with one another fluently through speech. Art they must have; it is a human craving almost as strong as the need for food, drink, and sleep. If they are deprived of art—good art—for long, as sometimes happens in history, the craving, far from disappearing, becomes stronger than ever, and artists, often great artists, promptly arise to satisfy it.

The art of ancient Egypt, in the three millennia before Jesus Christ, illustrates this. The achievements of the Old Kingdom, which produced the pyramids of Giza and much else, were followed by a social and cultural collapse, known as the First Intermediate Period. When this came to an end, the Middle Kingdom arose, with astonishing suddenness, reassuming all the main characteristics of the art of the Old Kingdom, but with added brilliance: The best hardstone portrait-busts, for instance, date from this time. Again, a collapse followed, the Second Intermediate Period, followed by the New Kingdom, swiftly developing into the age of grandeur we associate with Rameses II and Tutankhamen, and Egyptian art continued until it was absorbed into the art of the Greco-Roman world.

The process of declension and recovery is more specifically illustrated in the depiction of pictorial space on flat or curved surfaces. This was a technical discovery of the ancient Greeks, which may be said to have been achieved by the 5th century B.C., as we can see from examination of Red Attic vases, and was transmitted to the Hellenistic and Roman worlds. Most of the paintings of Greco-Roman antiquity have disappeared, but we can observe at Pompeii and elsewhere that linear perspective had been mastered, along with the foreshortening of figures. These pictorial techniques are essential to the creation of genuine illusion in surface art—they make it far more exciting and open up endless possibilities of development.

But sometime after the 4th century A.D., they were lost.

Mr. Johnson, the English journalist and historian, is the author of, among many other books, *A History of the American People*. His forthcoming book is about the Renaissance.

The process of their recovery, in 13th- and 14th-century Italy, has been brilliantly described in John White's book, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space*. The excitement of the artists at being able to present realistic figures in genuine space was so intense, and the popularity of the new or recovered illusionism so enormous, as to constitute one of the principal dynamics of the Renaissance, so that within a comparatively short time artists were able to do everything the masters of antiquity could do, and a great deal more. If we take a long view of the history of art, the moral seems to be that collapses need not be final but can be the prelude to fresh advances—one step backward, two forward.

That a collapse has occurred in our own time is beyond doubt. Let me give one example. When, a few years ago, the sculptor Gerald Laing decided that Modern Art was a nonsense, or at any rate a blind alley, and wished to return to traditional representational sculpture, he discovered it was exceedingly difficult to learn the technology at that high level. He found modern textbooks useless. Then he was lucky enough to come across a copy of *Modelling and Sculpting the Human Figure* by Edward Lanteri, Professor of Sculpture at London's Royal College of Art towards the end of the 19th century, from which he learned a great deal. He learned even more from the elderly Roman bronze-caster George Mancini, who had come to London to cast garden statuary before the First World War. He used exclusively traditional tools, such as bow-drills, believing that crude modern welding and grinding techniques, which make corrections to an ill-cast bronze possible, produce results that are inferior to a perfectly cast bronze. So Laing, by learning directly from Mancini, was able to take his place in a grand tradition going back to Donatello in the early 15th century, indeed in some respects to Nicola Pisano in the 13th.

This is one example. There are many others. In the second half of the 19th century, there were in Paris a number of studios where draftsmanship, particularly of the human figure, was taught to a standard probably never before approached, even in 15th- and 16th-century Florence, because the French master draftsmen were able to build on the Florentine corpus of achievement. Great foreign artists, like Mary Cassatt and John Singer Sargent, as well as French students, were able to achieve levels of accomplishment in these studios that would seem almost miraculous today. Unfortunately, under the successive hammer-blows of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, and their successors, this studio tradition, so long in the making, was destroyed. By the mid 20th century, draftsmanship as such was ceasing to be taught at all in the great majority of art schools, in France and everywhere else. Many students emerged from the schools less able to draw

than when they went in; and as Vasari pointed out in the 16th century, without drawing—*disegno*—you cannot paint. The history of art suggests that the discipline, leadership, competition, and mutual instruction of a well-organized studio, whether it be the one from the Egyptian New Kingdom whose foundations can be traced in the Tell el-Amarna site (where the bust of Queen Nefertiti now in the Berlin Museum was found) or the great studio-shop of Verrocchio in 15th-century Florence, where Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, Lorenzo di Credi, and many other masters learned their craft, is the best way—perhaps the only way—to achieve the highest levels of skill.

TO THE STUDIO, AGAIN

Hence the first point I wish to make about the recovery of art in the new millennium is that it is likely to be based upon a renewal of the studio tradition. There are, in fact, signs of this happening. Some public art schools in the big capitals are beginning to teach draftsmanship and related skills again. Students enjoy acquiring and practicing these skills because they are more testing than the tedious "inventiveness" of putting animals in tanks of formaldehyde or presenting an unmade bed as sculpture—all the excesses of the final wave of Modern Art. The best kind of studio is one presided over by a recognized master practitioner of the craft, who is also a genuine pedagogue, and I suspect that the coming revival of the studio will occur when successful painters and sculptors begin to admit students onto their premises to watch and learn, and have their work subject to criticism. It will not take much to bring about this revival because

this form of instruction, as centuries of experience proves, is by far the best way for the young to learn. If only two or three leading artists, in one of the big centers like London, Paris, or New York, set up their shops, the results will be so quick and spectacular that the practice will spread. It may be, however, that the studio revival will come about outside the main 20th-century art centers, in one of the capitals formerly behind the Iron Curtain—Warsaw perhaps, or Budapest, or even St. Petersburg. The long years of Communist thought- and art-control had the effect of nourishing deep-seated resentment against all forms of cultural domination, including that of Modern Art itself, so that unpredictable and creative rebellions are likely in those parts of the world. The same may also be true of China, where the authoritarian regime is now decaying and such excesses as the Cultural Revolution, with its destructive frontal assault on all forms of traditional art, have produced long-term forces that will eventually manifest themselves in dazzling displays of art. I am also hopeful of seeing strange and exciting creative forms



Before the collapse: John Singer Sargent's
Acheson Sisters

Foto Marburg/Art Resource, N.Y.

emerging from Japan, where artists have for two generations been engaged in superficial imitations of the Modern Art of the West and have found it rebarbative. China and Japan represent artistic traditions of great antiquity, strength, and complexity, which have avoided the self-destructive dynamism of Western culture and are due for a renaissance that, like the Italian Renaissance of the 15th century, may produce new standards of excellence and creativity. I expect to see, early in the new millennium, all kinds of cross-fertilizations and new currents in the great Eurasian land-mass, with places hitherto more famed for commerce, like Singapore and Shanghai, becoming international centers of art and craftsmanship. We have to rid ourselves of the notion that leadership in art is the permanent prerogative of the West.

WHERE ARE THE NEW MATERIALS?

What has surprised me, during the last half-century, has been the failure of artists to take advantage of technological progress, especially in chemistry, to work with new materials. Art has been highly experimental in form, which has produced only satiation and sterility, but curiously conservative in its media. It is true that, from the early 1920s onward, artists used wood, bricks, metal, and rags to concoct sculptural forms, and they glued all kinds of material on canvas to produce "paintings." But these are fashion tricks, con art, mere stunts, designed to shock, an ephemeral form of display now ancient and cobwebby. But for the actual practice of art, even those artists most closely linked with Modern Art have continued to use lead pencils and charcoal sticks, oil paint and gouache, pastels and watercolors, all traditional.

Painting in oils, the standard technology of two-

dimensional art still, is now half a millennium old. Artists have in recent times dabbled in new media like acrylic, but the vast majority of them stick to oil-on-canvas. It would be hard to think of any other occupation involving extreme dexterity of hand, mind, and eye, where the basic tools have remained more or less stationary for five centuries.

This conservatism is all the more remarkable in that, as Theophilus noted eight hundred years ago, oil is most unsatisfactory. It is time-consuming. It is messy and smelly. It makes the achievement of really delicate effects extremely hard. Even fine canvas provides a rough and unsympathetic surface. The business of multiple brushes, which have to be washed thoroughly at the end of each painting session, a heavy, clumsy palette, which must be cleaned and scrubbed, the mixing of linseed oil and turpentine, and other "vehicles"—all these laborious aspects are surprising survivals. They discourage *plein air* work and make painters heavily dependent on studio facilities. And studios tend to get into disgusting messes—witness photographs of the astounding squalor in which Francis Bacon produced his "masterpieces."

Given the ever-growing ability of chemists to produce materials to order, I cannot believe that this dependence on such an unsatisfactory medium will continue. Indeed my guess is that a systematic revival of the studio system will quickly produce a switch to new materials, which will enable painters to achieve the highest effect of clarity and luminous color, while drying quickly, being easy and clean to use, and allowing the most delicate and sensitive brushwork. I also expect the new media to have the essential properties of watercolor—transparency, washability, creative blending, and what might be called X-factor surprise effects. In a hundred years' time painters will be working on far more conve-

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nient, transportable, easily trimmed, and responsive surfaces, in a great variety of materials matched to the genre of work proposed, and they will be using mixed-media techniques of stunning subtlety and invention. The net effect will be to make a painter's life easier, to raise his standards and simultaneously his productivity, so he can make a decent living and at the same time produce quality work at modest prices. It is astonishing that almost all the present forms of reproduction of two-dimensional artwork involve 19th-century technology—or even earlier methods—and have been only marginally improved since. If we consider the transformation of acoustic recording techniques, since the first wax cylinders of the 1880s and 1890s, and the present quality and cheapness of, say, operatic recordings, it is lamentable that the visual arts should have been so badly served by printing technology in the 20th century. This state of affairs will not continue, and I expect an early revolution in the way artists themselves will be able to replicate, and so sell, their creations.

Sculpture, too, is due, indeed overdue, for a technological transformation. While it is vital that the traditional techniques I have described should be retained, taught, and improved upon, better materials ought to be available and

means devised to take some of the hard labor and expense out of sculpting in such materials as bronze. Few sculptors—even fewer than painters—make a decent living; a lamentably large number go bankrupt, and these

include famous figures. The basic *cire perdue* bronze-sculpting technology goes back to the Greece of the 5th century B.C. and even beyond, and, though improved and modified by some modern devices, it is still horribly daunting and industrial, a great deterrent to women sculptors and many men also. Shockingly few contemporary buildings contain sculptural elements—fewer than at any time in recorded history—and cost is the main reason. In the next millennium we will face this problem. Giant chemical firms will make studies, identify the problems, and solve them. Sculptors will benefit, and proliferate; buildings will be adorned, externally and internally, and future generations will live in a world ornamented and uplifted by forms and shapes in a vast variety of new materials, which will humanize the strident lines of architectural progress and make cityscapes less daunting.

ARCHITECTURE: THE PLACE TO BE

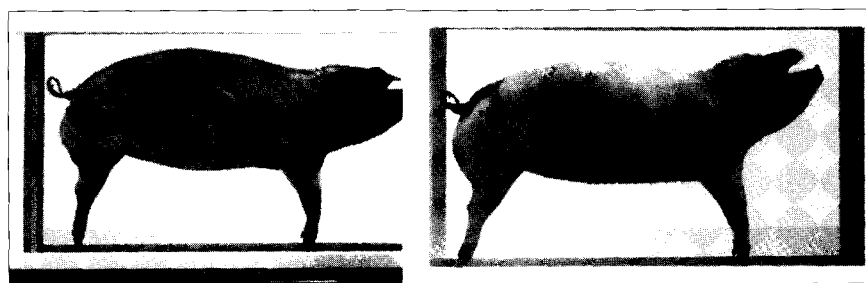
The use of sculpture and other decorative features on a huge scale will be one way in which architecture will recover from the sleep of reason and beauty that has marked its brutal progression through the 20th century. Architecture has been the dark art, the victim of false ideologies—of functionalism, of collectivism, of egalitarianism—that have produced

terrifying quantities of buildings of immense size and stupefying ugliness, all over the world. But the worst is past. Lessons have been learned. Architects have now largely abandoned ideology and are returning to style as their guide. The opportunities are immense—indeed, I happily predict that the 21st century will be an age of great architecture, and this is the profession I would now recommend to any intelligent and well-organized teenager who is thinking of making a career in the arts.

The reason is three-fold. First, information technology and its application in internal circuiting of buildings opens up opportunities for designing them in radically different shapes that produce vistas and effects never before seen in structures. Second, the growing range of new materials available can be used to make such shapes not only more exciting but variable, once the deadening principle of functionalism is scrapped. Third, the world is becoming richer, and wealth is spreading, not just geographically but down the social ladder. Land resources are finite and values grow steadily, so men and women are increasingly concerned with the quality of what they build or rebuild. That is the opportunity for the architect to revert, using modern forms and materials, to the

old tradition of display, ostentation, and elaborate fantasy, which in turn gave us the Gothic and Baroque, with calming intervals of classicism.

Music provides some of the same paradoxes as painting: an almost infinite willingness of



A sign of the collapse: This Little Piggy Went to Market, This Little Piggy Stayed Home by Damien Hirst

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composers to experiment with the kind of sounds they can score on a music sheet, with a willful ignorance of, and indifference to, the way in which those sounds are produced. For most of the 20th century, the more daring composers have been trying to break free from traditional tonality, evolved over half a millennium, and on the whole have failed because the public will not accept the noises that result. It is a damning and unprecedented fact that more than 80 percent of the works played at public concerts in New York and London in the closing years of the 20th century were in fact written before the year 1914.

Yet in other ways musicians remain destructively conservative. The composition and structure of the orchestra has not changed during the 20th century in any important respect; nor has the type of instrument used or the way in which it is made, nor for that matter the way in which opera singers are trained to use their voices. Composers do not seem to show any interest in the physics of sound. Yet the way in which vibrating columns of air are produced offers endless opportunities for experiment with the means. There is, for instance, the emerging science of cryogenics, sometimes called deep-freezing. That can have seemingly magical effects on a trumpet or flute made in traditional fashion, and indicates what might be produced by radical alterations in design—or

entirely new instruments specifically created to take advantage of temperature variations. This is only one small example of the application of science to music, but it indicates to me that we shall be hearing many completely new sounds in the new millennium—music of the spheres, indeed!

There is a difference between writing and the other arts. As Evelyn Waugh often remarked, most people feel they are ignorant of music, painting, and architecture, and therefore can be imposed upon. But they know how to read and write, and therefore the book is not a mystery. They follow their tastes. For three quarters of a century, the literary experts have been insisting that *Ulysses* is the greatest written work of the modern age, and that *Finnegans Wake* points to the future. But the public takes no notice, and James Joyce has had no successors. Traditional forms of writing predominate. Indeed, writing is too conservative. The 20th century is the first for over seven hundred years in which no new form of writing has emerged, unless you count the feeble attempts to apply the drama to broadcasting as a new form. So an explosion is overdue, and we can expect it early in the 21st century.

AFTER A VANISHING, A REAPPEARING?

It could be argued, in general, that forms of artistic expression in the 20th century, while superficially experimental, have been in reality deeply conservative in the models and materials used, and that is why they have so often descended into insulting parodies of traditional creations—what is Picasso, other than a man who spat in the face of Velasquez? And one reason that they are so conservative, at bottom, is that they are the servants and products of free-spending states, which believe that it is part of their public responsibilities to subsidize the arts. Whereas an individual patron, spending his own money like Federico da Montefeltro or Cosimo de Medici, may back innovation and genius, state spending by committees and bureaucrats or politicians merely reinforces existing patterns, especially those claiming novelty. Hence it does positive harm. No state in history has ever spent more on the arts per capita, in the years 1960–2000, than France. And what do we find? France now has no outstanding poets, novelists, or playwrights, no painters or sculptors of the slightest consequence, no architects worth employing and no front-rank composers. The immense fertility of the years 1910–50 has vanished as if it had never been.

One thing I predict with confidence is that early in the new millennium, state subsidy of the arts will largely disappear. And it will happen quite suddenly. There is a parallel here with government-to-government cash transfers to poor nations, which, from the 1950s to the early 1980s, were conducted on an enormous scale and seemed one of the fixed geopolitical facts of life. It took a long time for Western governments to realize that such aid had the sole result of keeping incompetent governments in power. But once the penny dropped, the practice ceased, and any assistance is now hard-headed and left to, or channeled through, the market. There will come a point, probably sooner rather than later, when we will decide that the arts too must be left to the market and the vagaries of individual taste. Then they will be free to flourish.

NR

HISTORY

COME, CLIO

RICHARD PIPES

THERE is an anecdote circulating in the history department at Harvard, where I have taught until recently, concerning a senior who was given an oral examination to determine the level of honors for which he qualified. Requested to describe the origins of World War II, he looked stumped. After a moment's hesitation, he asked: "Were there two of them?"

The story—even if apocryphal—illustrates the growing ignorance of history in our society as well as the sense of its irrelevance. The process seems to date from the 1960s, a decade that marked—for reasons that are far from clear, inasmuch as the Sixties were accompanied by no political or economic crisis—a watershed in Western culture. Since fifth-century Athens, when Herodotus and Thucydides wrote their great accounts of the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, the past was considered not only interesting but also pertinent, in that it taught by examples—usually tragic ones—what mistakes ought to be avoided. The classical adage *Historia est magistra vitae*—"History is the teacher of life"—epitomized this attitude.

It was first subverted in the early nineteenth century under the influence of German Idealist philosophers who taught that history was not static but dynamic and made up of many histories, each connected with the ethos of a great national civilization. Even so, these thinkers assigned history a central role in the understanding of life because the human spirit realized itself through the progress of history.

The breakdown of this outlook in our time can be attributed to several causes.

One cause is the extraordinary advances in science and technology that began in the nineteenth century and gained momentum in the twentieth. The invention of weapons capable of destroying life on earth; the discovery of medicines capable of eradicating most of the traditional diseases and thus significantly prolonging life; the ability to send human beings to the moon and possibly beyond; the dramatic shrinkage of the globe owing to air transport and electronic communication—all had the effect of making the entire human past appear irrelevant. Historical biographies continue to flourish because they read like novels, as do tales of wars and other dramatic events. But the notion that the past has any bearing on our own lives, either by influencing in subtle ways how we think and how we act or by instructing us how to think and how to act, is simply alien to the vast majority of contemporaries.

Another cause of changed attitudes toward the past is, I

Mr. Pipes is a historian, principally of Russia. His most recent book is *Property and Freedom*

believe, the unprecedented prosperity and peace that the Western world has enjoyed since the end of World War II under the umbrella of Pax Americana. We are well aware of the penalties of poverty and insecurity, but the wages of wealth and assurance have not as yet undergone examination, perhaps because the problem appears so transient. It seems to me that one of the pernicious effects of affluence and security is a decline in the sense of reality. The poor have little margin of safety: A peasant who miscalculates when to begin sowing and when to harvest faces hunger; a woman in a traditional society who bears an illegitimate child faces ostracism and want.

But in the modern welfare state mistakes of such a nature are far less costly: The destitute or single mother has the dole to fall back on. The truly affluent, more numerous than ever before, enjoy such a wide margin of safety that they can act quite irresponsibly. The result has been a diminished sense that experience teaches and that rules matter. In the lives of most of us, the outcome of the presidential election in the year 2000 will hardly be an issue of great consequence, as it is unlikely to affect peace and prosperity. This enables the candidates to concentrate on their "images," which they try on as if they were costumes, rather than on substantive issues. In the 1932 election, by contrast, when the United States seemed on the verge of economic and social collapse, it mattered immensely who won.

MORE POISON FROM PARIS

One of the by-products of intellectual irresponsibility is the phenomenon known as "postmodernism." As with most noxious ideas of the past three centuries—materialism, Jacobinism, socialism, positivism, anti-Semitism, Pol-Potism—it originated in Paris. Postmodernism teaches that there are no objective facts, that all reality is the product of personal attitudes and interests, from which it follows that history cannot be presented in an objective manner: One man's truth is as good as another's.

One corollary of this theory, which has gained acceptance among many people who may never have heard of it, is that the lines separating history from fiction are becoming blurred. A good example of such blurring is the recent pseudo-biography of Ronald Reagan by Edmund Morris in which confirmed facts of Reagan's life are blended with fictitious events invented by the author. While most reviewers have savaged the book, some found nothing wrong with his methodology on the grounds that invention which "enhances" reality is a good thing. Cinematic "docudramas," such as Oliver Stone's film on the assassination of John F. Kennedy, which made preposterous claims of CIA involvement, belong to the same category and proceed on the same premise.

Is scholarly history possible and does it matter? The answer to both questions must be an unequivocal yes.

No professional historian works under the illusion that he is able to depict events with the precision of a scientist who determines the speed of sound or diagnoses the presence of cancer. In his work he is always conscious of the complexity of phenomena and the various ways they can be interpreted. His choice of events, his emphasis on one or another aspect of them, is invariably a matter of discretion. In this sense there can be no "objective" history, that is, history that reconstructs the past in an incontrovertible and universally acceptable manner.

But there is such a thing, if it is defined to mean respect for facts and an honest effort to depict them in all their complexity. For example, we *know* that Morris could not have witnessed some of the events in Reagan's life which he describes because he was too young to be present when they happened. We *know* that no evidence has come to light to indicate that the CIA was implicated in the murder of Kennedy and that, therefore, to claim that it had is not a fact but a lie.

When we deal with more complicated historical phenomena, the criteria of truth are more difficult to determine, but not out of reach. Take one example, with which I am especially familiar—the Russian Revolution. The Soviet regime, for good reasons of its own, always insisted that its founders had seized power in October 1917 with the support of the majority of the nation: indeed, that the Bolsheviks had been forced to take power by the impatient masses. Now, this assertion can be disproved by pointing out that in the nationwide elections to the

Constituent Assembly held the following month, the Bolshevik party received less than one-quarter of the vote, and that even this minority it secured on the deceptive platform that it had taken power not in its own behalf but that of the soviets. I believe, therefore, that it is a demonstrable truth that the October 1917 events were a coup d'état rather than a revolution, even if their significance is open to varied interpretations.

It will not do to pretend, in the name of historical relativism, that the Nazis did not perpetrate the Holocaust or that the Americans used biological weapons in the Korean War. One may argue, as has recently been done by the English historian Niall Ferguson, that Britain could have and should have stayed out of the First World War, but one cannot dispute that the war was triggered by the German invasion of Belgium.

The professional historian is generally aware when he is making statements of fact and when he is engaging in judgments about facts. Hence, the assertion that all facts are interpretations is simply nonsense. Its beneficiaries are those

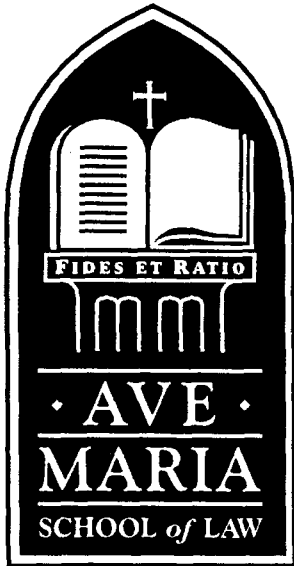


"Proletarians of all countries, unite!"
Bolshevik propaganda from May 1921

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who want to plead their own agendas and to exploit the past for their own purposes.

The relevance of history is, of course, somewhat more difficult to demonstrate.

It is said of Mao Tse-tung that when asked what he thought of the historical significance of the French Revolution he replied: "It is too early to tell." Like most anecdotes of this nature it sounds too good to be true, but it does illustrate what the knowledge of history inculcates, namely a sense of affinity with the past that comes naturally to nations of great antiquity. It is astonishing how brief recorded human history is: a mere five thousand years, dating back to the invention of writing in Egypt and Mesopotamia, c. 3000 B.C. Compared with the antiquity of the world's fauna and flora this is but a second. And yet we have become so conditioned to think that we are living in an era of unparalleled change that the human past appears to our own generation not only irrelevant but also so distant as to be incomprehensible.

I was born in 1923; my paternal grandfather, whom I remember as a tall, distinguished, but remote gentleman, had been born eighty years earlier. Now, in 1843 Metternich dominated the European continent, Queen Victoria was 24, Dickens had just published *A Christmas Carol*. The world had to wait another half a century for electrical illumination and the internal combustion engine. I mentioned such facts to my

**I realized that for the class of '99,
born around 1978, the Vietnam War
was ancient history.**

students to illustrate how close seemingly distant historical events really are. I do not think I was particularly successful in this endeavor—but then I realized that for the class of '99, born around 1978, the Vietnam War was ancient history.

We live, indeed, at a time of great changes, though humanity has experienced even greater changes in the past: One merely has to consider the transformation that occurred some ten thousand years ago, when people, after supporting themselves for eons by hunting and gathering, began to go over to agriculture. Europeans living in the second half of the 15th century witnessed such events as the discovery of America, the disappearance of Byzantium (the heir to the Roman Empire), and the invention of printing; before long, Martin Luther would shatter the millennial unity of European Christendom. Change is in the nature of things and by no means places the past out of reach. To understand the past merely requires knowledge and an effort of the imagination.

IF I HAD BEEN AN EGYPTIAN

One of the wonderful rewards of historical study is the way it exposes us to the broadest range of human behavior. When I read that ancient Egyptians believed that unless the pharaoh punctiliously performed all the prescribed rituals, the Nile would not rise during its annual flooding to the required height (some 20 feet), threatening famine, I have a double reaction. On the one hand such belief appears to me

absurd, since the Nile's flooding was determined not by the actions of the pharaoh but by the quantity of rain that fell on it during its passage through the Ethiopian plateau. On the other hand I am able to understand why people hold such beliefs and am prepared to concede that if I had lived at the time in Egypt, I would have shared them.

Whenever we study the past, we run into such discrepancies from our own culture. Reading historical works of a synthetic nature, which depict different cultures and yet make them both comprehensible and believable—e.g., Henri Frankfort's *Kingship and the gods*, Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, or Burckhardt's treatise on the Renaissance—we are receiving the broadest possible liberal education, for, by means of contrast, they make us aware of who we are.

And finally, consider the impact of the past on the future. The student of history, conscious as he is of changes, both great and subtle, realizes at the same time how stubborn and impervious to change are the fundamental features of human nature and behavior.

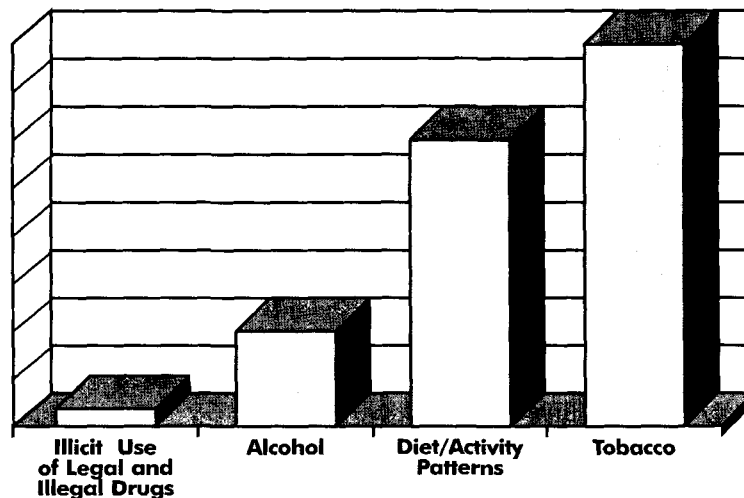
I have spent my entire professional life—more than fifty years since enrolling in graduate school—on the study of Russia. In the course of these studies, I have formulated theories of Russia's social and political culture that posited continuities from the beginnings of statehood in the Middle Ages to the present. Among the attributes of this culture are weakly developed social institutions matched by overly developed state institutions resulting in a propensity for autocratic government, that is, the rule of arbitrary human will rather than of law, and, in external relations, reliance on military power and a proclivity for imperialism.

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 and the leaders of its principal successor, the Russian Federation, proclaimed adherence to the Western ideals of democracy and the free market, I took these professions at face value, partly because I wanted to believe them and partly because I thought the trauma of Communism had wrought among the Russians a thorough change of mentality. My belief in the possibility of such change was based on analogy, namely what appeared to be transformations of similar magnitude in the mindset of the Jews after the Holocaust and among the Japanese following defeat in the Second World War.

The expectation proved illusory. When democracy and capitalism did not bring Russians order and prosperity as quickly as they had hoped, they turned against them with a vengeance. Judging by current opinion polls, less than a decade after formally adopting Western models, the majority of Russians have come to reject them in favor of their own, vaguely understood national ways. Thus 69 percent of Russians polled in early 1999 (that is, before the Kosovo campaign) declared that they saw the West (defined as Western business circles, the U.S., and NATO) as Russia's "enemy." Fifty-eight percent wanted Russia to resist "Western influences" and follow her "own path." Slightly over half found multiparty elections objectionable. And an impressive 78 percent of the respondents answered affirmatively to the question, "Should Russia remain a Great Power?," presumably interpreting the term "Great Power" in the military sense, since this is the only sense in which the USSR had qualified as such.

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**Why arrest 1.6 million people each year for drugs?
Does jailing drug users make more sense than
jailing overweight people and smokers?**

* Estimated deaths attributed to: Illicit Use of Legal and Illegal Drugs - 20,000; Alcohol - 100,000; Diet/Activity Patterns - 300,000; Tobacco - 400,000.

Source: *Substance Abuse and Mental Health Statistics Source Book 1998* citing 1990 figures. (Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services). Pg. 218

**Common Sense for Drug Policy, Kevin B. Zeese, President
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I suspect that, had polls existed four centuries ago, the results of a survey of Muscovite opinion would have yielded similar results. How quickly the anti-Western attitudes inculcated by the Orthodox Church, and the imperial pretensions implanted by the czars, flowed to the surface!

Clearly, those among us who believed in Russia's decisive break with the past had been wildly over-optimistic. When I look at this evidence I am not even so certain of a fundamental break in Jewish and Japanese attitudes since their respective catastrophes. A kind of fatigue seems to be afflicting Israelis, along with a growing inclination to rely on wheeling and dealing with their declared enemies—which had been the Jewish way of survival in the Diaspora—rather than a firm insistence on their rights. And as for the Japanese, while rejecting traditional militarism they have infused their commercial activities with something akin to a military spirit.

I once saw a documentary film on the Galapagos Islands. The narrator stressed how unafraid the animals on those islands, made famous by Charles Darwin, were of human beings, whom they had come to know relatively recently and who had never caused them harm. The one exception were the seals, which would dive into the sea at the mere approach of people. The reason for their panic was that for two centuries they had been hunted by whalers. Their behavior indicates that the Galapagos seals have a collective memory, which, were it written down, would constitute their history. How much more, then, are human beings likely to be affected by collective experiences, and to treat the present and the future as continuations of the past!

NR

HUMAN NATURE

DEEPER INTO THE BRAIN

CHARLES MURRAY

WE, *Homo sapiens*, are about to learn how to alter human nature at roughly the same time that we finally learn for sure what that nature is.

Our ignorance about the underlying truth of human nature has not been for want of trying. Philosophers took up the question as one of the very first that human beings systematically asked about themselves. But philosophers produced answers as various as Aristotle's and Rousseau's. Since the late 1900s, behavioral and social scientists too have tried to understand human nature. But while they have illuminated many useful bits and pieces, they have failed as system-builders. What is left of Freud, out of the beliefs that were so intellectually per-

vasive in mid century? Psychotherapy remains, in profuse variety, but only remnants of Freudianism. What is left of B. F. Skinner? Behaviorism is still a productive branch of psychology, but the Skinnerian vision of human nature that once seemed so compelling is dead. As for Marx, does anything at all survive? For more than a century, Marxism was throughout continental Europe the leading intellectual framework for thinking about how political institutions can realize the nature of man. That edifice has collapsed utterly.

How can we have expended so much of our collective genius on understanding human nature and still know so little for certain? Because up until now, we have been able to observe only behavior. People can hold very different views of human nature—man is by nature altruistic or by nature selfish; by nature amoral or by nature endowed with a moral sense—because we observe in the human animal, in abundance, every sort of behavior. Or to put it statistically, human nature does not consist of universal human characteristics but of distributions. Is mankind altruistic or selfish? From everyday experience, we know that some people behave selfishly and some behave altruistically. When one says that human beings are by nature altruistic or selfish, one is actually saying that a distribution of the human population on the characteristic of “underlying biological propensity to altruism” will have a certain shape and median. The implications of a distribution in which, for example, the average value is “fairly selfish” has very different implications from a bell curve in which the average value is “fairly altruistic.” The implications of a curve that is narrow and steep (meaning that almost all human beings are very close to the median value) are very different from those of a shape that is wide and short (meaning that human nature for this characteristic is all over the map).

The problem is that, while scientists can measure the observed shape of these behaviors, they have been stymied by the nature/nurture problem. This is not to say that we know nothing. Just as geologists know a lot about the probability of finding oil based on rock formations on the surface, psychologists have learned to infer a lot about the heritability of observed traits. But in both cases, the observer is dealing with outcroppings and probabilities, while the exact, inarguable truth lies hidden.

This situation is about to change. No one can tell how rapidly and how completely the story will unfold. A few brave souls—brave indeed to buck the consistent lesson of the last five hundred years of science—still argue that the mysteries of the human mind will forever be mysteries. But E. O. Wilson's reading of the situation in his 1998 book, *Consilience*, seems much more plausible. The neuroscientists, increasingly understanding how the brain works, and the molecular biologists, increasingly understanding which genes do what, are about to link up with the social sciences, according to Wilson, in a “webwork of causal explanation” that brings human behavior within the realm of rigorous investigation previously reserved for physical phenomena. And not just individual behavior. “The explanatory network now touches on the edge of culture itself,” in Wilson's words—or to put it another way, we are on the edge of understanding how human nature in individuals produces social and political institutions.

Mr. Murray is the Bradley Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

What we know now is fragmentary. But the speed with which that knowledge is expanding is so fast, and accelerating, that it is reasonable to expect that we are going to know a great deal about many, many aspects of human nature and their social implications within just a few more decades. By the end of the 21st century, we will be approaching biological truth about these topics.

It will be a winding road, with many false pronouncements that will be revised a year later, as new data come to light. Even those new findings that are solidly based will seldom be exciting individually. We will not find an aggression gene or a marriage gene or an IQ gene. Instead, we will learn about complex combinations of genes and their alleles that affect a behavior, and about how they interact with the unimaginably complicated neural and hormonal processes that affect behavior. We will learn about the interaction between biology and environment.

TRANSLATION INTO POLITICAL CODES

The practical importance of these impending discoveries lies in this: The great conflicts of the last two centuries have in large part been the story of differing views of human nature translated into political codes. Communism's use of Marxism was the paradigmatic example, explicitly and aggressively asserting that human nature is soft plastic that can be molded into any configuration by society's political and economic institutions. But the debates over social policy within the democratic West have also been underlain by conflicting understandings of human nature. Are mothers peculiarly suited to raising small children or can fathers do it just as well? Should women be in combat? The positions one takes are based on assumptions about the innate differences between men and women. The welfare state makes sense, or doesn't, depending on underlying beliefs about how human beings respond to economic incentives and, more profoundly, about how human beings achieve satisfaction in life. Should we try to deal with crime by attacking root causes? Depending on your definition of "root causes," attacking them could mean an anti-poverty program or more prisons—and your definition can ultimately be traced back to your beliefs about human nature.

It will be a cumulative process, but, as time goes on, our increasingly certain knowledge of human nature is going to shrink the wiggle-room for certain political positions. Think of the process as a scientific version of the Alger Hiss case. As of 2000, we have, analogously, already discovered the Pumpkin Papers. The scientific literature already in hand, not to mention common sense, gives us a pretty

good idea of where this story is leading, just as dispassionate observers in 1948 had a pretty good idea that Hiss was guilty. Hiss's advocates defended his innocence for decades after the Papers were found, but those advocates dwindled as new evidence periodically came to light. Finally the Venona intercepts were revealed, and the debate effectively ended. So it will be with the uncovering of human nature.

**Think of the process as a scientific
version of the Alger Hiss case.**

**As of 2000, we have already
discovered the Pumpkin Papers.**

The choice of analogy betrays my own expectations of the unfolding story. What we already know leads me to believe that the story of human nature as revealed by genetics and neuroscience will be Aristotelian in its philosophical shape and conservative in its political one. We will learn for certain such things as that women innately make better nurturers of small children than do men and that men innately make better soldiers than do women. Regarding these and many other human characteristics impinging on marriage, the upbringing of children, and the enforcement of social order, I am predicting that the adages of the Right will usually prove to be

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closer to the mark than the adages of the Left, and that many of the causes of the Left will be revealed as incompatible with the way human beings are wired.

To put it in terms of Left versus Right, however, understates the magnitude of what is likely to happen. Of all the casualties of our growing knowledge of human nature, the most politically far-reaching will be the 20th-century's curious attachment to literal human equality. Let me draw on the response to *The Bell Curve* to illustrate what uncharted territory we are sailing into. As authors of the book, Richard Herrnstein and I thought that *The Bell Curve* contained powerful ammunition for the political Left. If IQ is important in determining life's outcomes and IQ is not acquired by merit, then one legitimate line of argument is that the government should intervene to make up for the unfairnesses of nature and capitalism. What we did not realize was how important the egalitarian premise is to the worldview of the Left. It is not enough that governments guarantee equal rights to all; it is not even enough that governments intervene to equalize outcomes. It must also be true that inequalities in individuals are the result of the social, economic, and political system, rather than of inherent differences in ability. I am still not sure why this premise is so important—the intellectual case for redistributionist policies does not depend on it—but it is.

In their own way, politicians of the Right are equally in thrall to the egalitarian premise. For example, no major Republican politician is willing to say in public that some of the social problems we most deplore are rooted to some degree in personal deficiencies. Try to imagine a GOP presidential candidate saying in front of the cameras, "One reason that we still have poverty in the United States is that a lot of poor people are born lazy." You cannot imagine it because that kind of thing cannot be said. And yet this unimaginable statement merely implies that when we know the complete genetic story, it will turn out that the population below the poverty line in the United States has a configuration of the relevant genetic makeup that is significantly different from the configuration of the population above the poverty line. This is not unimaginable. It is almost certainly true. It is also almost certainly true that statistically significant distributions of biological makeup separate just about any other groups that show substantially different patterns of behavior.

BEYOND RACE AND SEX

The group differences that people obsess about have to do with race and sex, but let me try to reach past that reflexive response to make a broader point: Statistically significant

genetic differences beyond the self-evident ones probably separate men from women, and people who call themselves "white" from people who call themselves "black" or "Asian," but they also probably distinguish the English from the French, employed Swedes from unemployed Swedes, observant Christians from lapsed ones, and people who collect stamps from people who backpack.

None of this should be earthshaking. Often we will be talking of group differences so subtle that they can be teased out only with the most sophisticated methods. Often these differences will have nothing to do with "better" or "worse," but just *vive la différence*. Even when the differences are substantial, the variation between two groups will almost always be dwarfed by the variation within groups—meaning that the overlap between two groups will be great. In a free society where people are treated as individuals, "So what?" is to me the appropriate response to genetic group differences. The only political implication of group differences is that we must work hard to ensure that our society is in fact free and that people are in fact treated as individuals. And yet I can tell you from personal experience that "So what?" is not a response that many others share. Today, to suggest that genetically based group differences are even probable provokes a reaction that resembles hysteria.

Now imagine a world a few decades hence in which it has been demonstrated that biologically based differences separate individuals and groups, and that some of these differences involve characteristics that are important to success in life. What will happen when a position that is taboo in public discourse is proved to be scientifically accurate?

Nothing will happen, it might be argued. Even now, hardly anyone

really believes in his heart of hearts that the strictly egalitarian line is true, so what difference will scientific proof make? But history suggests otherwise. Thomas Kuhn taught us in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* that first the old scientific paradigm begins to show cracks, then those cracks spread, and then, with remarkable speed, Kuhn's famous "paradigm shift" occurs. In just a few years, there are no more Ptolemaic astronomers, only Copernican ones; no more Aristotelian physicists, only Newtonian ones. Today we are at the stage of the spreading cracks, even if the egalitarian premise seems more politically impregnable than ever. But when the scientific debate eventually ends, it will not be merely a matter of scientists on the wrong side saying, "Oh, well," while the rest of our intellectual perspective continues unchanged; with the displacement of the old paradigm comes a new way of looking, not just at isolated bits of sci-



Aristotle wins.
With Plato, as painted by Raphael

Alinari/Art Resource, N.Y.

entific truth, but at the way the world works. Think of the Newtonian revolution and the Enlightenment. Closer to our own time, the Darwinian and Einsteinian revolutions were central to the development of the nonscientific intellectual world of the 20th century. So too will it be with the consequences of the neurogenetic revolution that is about to unfold. It will have transforming effects that spill over into our conceptions of politics, religion, and social relationships.

A NEW CAUSE FOR THE LEFT

A chief characteristic of a paradigm shift is that its consequences are unexpected. But I can illustrate the nature of the spillover with one of the few obvious possibilities—that eugenics will become a cause of the Left. Why obvious? After all, eugenics is not only in disrepute everywhere, “eugenicist” is one of the Left’s cursewords for people engaged in neurogenetic research. But eugenics is in disrepute because of Nazism, which has led us to forget that before Nazism it referred to a movement centered in Britain that was respectable and especially popular among intellectuals. To put it simply, the eugenicists made an assertion and drew from it a policy implication. Their assertion was that social problems would be greatly reduced if the lower classes had fewer children and the better classes had more. The policy implication they drew was that government policies should encourage that result.

As the biological basis for personal qualities statistically associated with social problems—low IQ, impulsiveness, short time-horizons, sociopathy, indolence—is understood, the old arguments about causality (e.g., “It’s poverty and disadvantage that create the low IQ, not the other way around”) will be resolved. There will still be a large role for environmental causes and solutions to social problems, but understanding the portion that is biological will permit analysts of the future to make fairly precise forecasts about the extent to which changes in fertility patterns may be expected to affect crime and poverty. The only difference will be that the old eugenicists had to rely on a rough statement (“the lower classes”), whereas eugenicists of the future will be able to be more precise (“people with the following genetic profiles”).

Now turn to the eugenicists’ political conclusion, that government should act to shape fertility patterns. It is not something that today’s Left likes to recall, but eugenicism was predominantly a movement of the British Fabian and socialist Left, not of Tories or the old Liberals. This political affinity was no accident, for a reason expressed by Sidney Webb, one of the brightest lights of British socialism. “No consistent eugenicist can be a ‘Laissez Faire’ individualist,” he wrote, “unless he throws up the game in despair. He must interfere, interfere, interfere!” Sidney and his wife Beatrice were joined in their enthusiasm for eugenics by the likes of George Bernard Shaw, Emma Goldman, and H. G. Wells.

As genetic engineering matures, a new, more insidious brand of eugenics will become possible—one that does not require the lower classes to stop having children, only to start having better children. This will be eugenics tailor-made for a Left constituted of people who are more squeamish about being repressive than their forebears, but who are just as ready to interfere, interfere, interfere, in a good cause. Will the Right stand firm against this ultimate intrusion of gov-

ernment? I pray so. But don’t bet on it. In the face of temptation, mainstream Republican politicians cannot be relied upon to say It’s None of the Government’s Business—an unhappy fact that may have reverberations when eugenics with a smiling face is upon us.

I have no idea how the new eugenicism will play out, only a general expectation that eugenics, anathema today, will be a spinoff of the neurogenetic revolution tomorrow. My main point is that many such effects will be triggered, that most of them are now unforeseeable, and that this will turn the intellectual and political landscape topsy-turvy.

What of the broader manipulation of human nature? Putting aside government intervention and confining ourselves to the voluntary choices of individuals, should we expect that *Homo sapiens* will take it into its collective head to redesign itself? I confess to a certain optimism. I suppose that sex selection will be common, and that some parents will, if they can, opt to make their babies more compassion-

**In the face of temptation,
mainstream Republican politicians
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Business—an unhappy fact.**

ate, or more competitive, or “more” of some other personality trait that they favor. Some parents may want to grow seven-foot-tall basketball players. But one of the main reasons that couples have babies is to produce *their* baby, the product of their combined genes. Motivations don’t get much more basic than that, and I think it unlikely that the typical parent will want to distort the process too much. The popular voluntary uses of gene manipulation are likely to be ones that avoid birth defects and ones that lead to improved overall physical and mental abilities. I find it hard to get upset about that prospect.

One may hypothesize a variety of darker sides to the ability to manipulate human tendencies. There are the unforeseeable effects of homogenization, for example. A world in which all the children are above average might be duller than we suppose. I am not confident in our ability to tweak the human sense of the rhythm of life to correspond with the extensions in lifespan that may occur. More broadly, our ability to affect the physical aspect of the human animal may run ahead of our ability to accommodate those changes to the ways in which the human psyche achieves happiness.

But these specific worries are the ruminations of a 20th-century man, destined to look as myopic a century from now as the predictions of 19th-century men about the 20th. I am confident of just one thing: Many of the people reading these words will live to see one of Thomas Kuhn’s paradigm shifts—one as broad and deep, as demoralizing and inspiring, as destructive and creative, as any that has taken place before. **NR**

BOOKS, ARTS & MANNERS

Why We Fought

MARC A. THIESSEN

The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression, edited by Stéphane Courtois, translated by Mark Kramer and Jonathan Murphy (Harvard, 858 pp., \$37.50)

LAST February, I met with former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet at the house outside London where he is being held by British authorities. As we discussed the efforts of a Spanish judge to extradite him to stand trial in Spain, Pinochet suddenly got up and disappeared into his study. He returned a few moments later carrying a hefty book. Handing it to me, he said: "This is what I was fighting against. This is what we prevented from happening to our country."

It read: *El Libro Negro del Comunismo*—"The Black Book of Communism."

The Black Book is a groundbreaking effort by a group of French scholars to document the human costs of Communism in the 20th century. Its publication caused a sensation in France when it was first released in 1997, but Americans were not able to see for themselves what the furor was all about until October 1999, when Harvard University Press finally released an English translation.

It was worth the wait. Taking advantage of many newly available archives in former Communist states, the authors (many of them former Communists themselves) have meticulously recorded the crimes, terror, and repression inflicted

Mr. Thiessen is spokesman for the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.



The "museum of genocide" in Cambodia, displaying the remains of the victims of the Khmer Rouge

ed by Communist regimes across the world. It is a powerful work.

The death toll they present is simply staggering. The USSR: nearly 20 million dead; China: 65 million; Vietnam: 1 million; North Korea: 2 million; Cambodia: 2 million; Eastern Europe: 1 million; Latin America: 150,000; Africa: 1.7 million; Afghanistan: 1.5 million. Stéphane Courtois and his colleagues conclude that between 85 and 100 million human beings were killed this century by Communist regimes.

Yet despite all the death and destruction left in its wake, Communism is still viewed by many intellectuals as a noble cause, the murder committed in its name simply an aberration. On the book's release in France, Communist Party chief Robert Hue declared that Communism was "a system dedicated to human liberation which was subsequently perverted." *The Black Book's* authors set out to prove that this is a lie. They show in painstaking detail—case by case, country by country, terror by terror—that Communism was from the very beginning a criminal enterprise. As historian Martin Malia puts it in his foreword, "there never was a benign, initial phase of Communism before some

mythical 'wrong turn' threw it off track."

In his chapter, "A State Against Its People," Nicolas Werth debunks the myth that Lenin's revolution was a humane experiment that was later corrupted by Stalin. The terror, he shows, began in the very first days of the Bolshevik revolution. Indeed, Werth establishes that in the first four months of their rule, the Bolsheviks executed more of their political opponents than had the czars in the entire previous century.

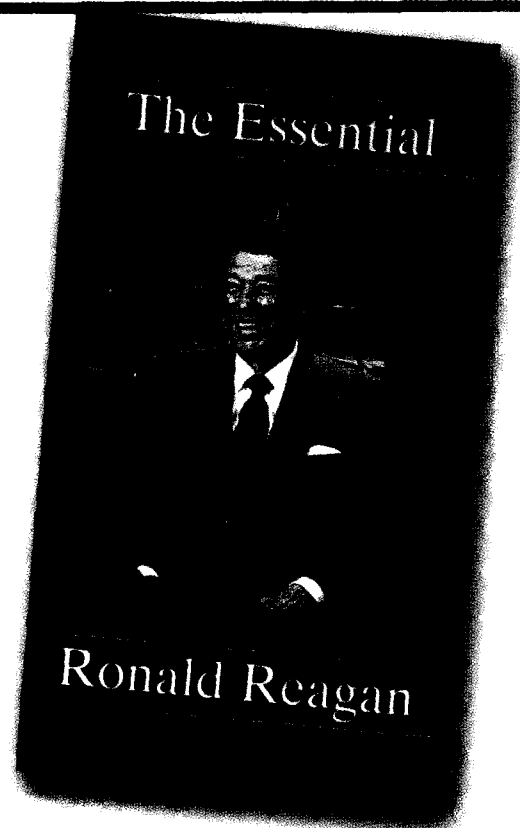
Here is Lenin, in a telegram sent on August 9, 1918, ordering the roundup of all "kulaks, priests, White Guards and other doubtful elements in a concentration camp" (a term coined by the Bolsheviks). Here he is again, ordering the Cheka (the predecessor of the KGB) to summarily execute "kulaks," who were small landholders: "You must make an example of these people. (1) Hang (I mean hang publicly, so that people see it) at least 100 kulaks, rich bastards, and known bloodsuckers. . . . Yours, Lenin."

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(The telegram concludes with an eerie "P.S. Find tougher people.") And here he is replying to his Commissar of Justice, Isaac Steinberg, who, complaining that the Cheka is carrying out summary executions, asks, "What is the point of a People's Commissariat for Justice? . . . It would be more honest to have a People's Commissariat for Social Extermination." Lenin responds: "Excellent idea! That's exactly how I see it. Unfortunately it wouldn't do to call it that."

Lenin's terror was, of course, followed by Stalin's, and from there the cancer metastasizes. Its spread is documented in subsequent chapters: Andrzej Paczkowski and Karel Bartosek document the brutal subjugation of Central and Southern Europe; Jean-Louis Margolin and Pierre Rigoulot document its spread through China and Asia (from Mao Tse-tung's "Great Leap Forward"—the worst man-made famine in history—to Pol Pot's murderous aping of Mao's policies in Cambodia); Pascal Fontaine, Yves Santamaria, and Sylvain Boulouque document Communism's bloody rampage through the Third World, in Latin America, Africa, and Afghanistan. The whole montage, Courtois explains, shows that "each national Communism has been linked by an umbilical cord to the Soviet womb."

Yet despite the deaths of nearly 100 million people at the hands of this Communist system, Malia notes that "virtually none of the responsible officials has been put on trial or punished." The same week that Pinochet was arrested in London, Cuban dictator Fidel Castro was in Portugal clinking glasses with heads of state at the Ibero-American summit. His crimes, too, are well documented in *The Black Book*: "From 1959 through the late 1990s more than 100,000 Cubans experienced life in one of [Castro's] camps [or] prisons . . . [and b]etween 15,000 and 17,000 people were shot." Yet Pinochet (who relinquished power, and left Chile a prosperous, thriving, free-market democracy) is held prisoner, while Castro is free, feted by world leaders.

The furor the book caused on its release in France is recounted in Malia's excellent introduction to the English edition. Few of the book's critics questioned the facts presented in this scrupu-

lous study. Rather, the controversy centered on several provocative conclusions in Courtois's introduction, where he addresses not only the guilt of Communism's butchers but the "complicity" of Western intellectuals who hailed Lenin, Stalin, Mao, "Uncle Ho," and Fidel Castro as heroes, ignored their crimes, and never repented or repudiated their former allegiances. "Many will say that they 'didn't know,'" Courtois writes. "But quite often this ignorance was merely the result of ideologically motivated self-deception. . . . And

■

**Nearly as shocking as
the deaths recorded in
The Black Book is the fact
that the work is the first effort
to document the full extent
of Communism's crimes.**

■

although many of these apologists have cast aside their gods of yesterday, they have done so quietly and discreetly."

These charges struck a nerve in France, where Socialist premier Lionel Jospin had established a coalition government with France's Communist Party and had three Communist ministers in his cabinet. His conservative opponents read excerpts from *The Black Book* in the French parliament, forcing Jospin to publicly defend his alliance with the Communists. *The Black Book* quickly shot to the bestseller lists, selling 70,000 copies in just three weeks.

Controversy also exploded over the inevitable comparison to Nazi Germany, and Courtois's complaint that while Communism killed nearly 100 million—four times the number killed by Hitler—"the status of ex-Communist carries with it no stigma . . . [whereas] past contact with Nazism . . . no matter how marginal or remote, confers an indelible stain." Critics argued that Nazism is clearly a greater evil because while Communism employed extermination for political ends, Nazism viewed extermination as an end in itself. But as

Martin Malia notes, this argument can also be turned on its head: "Eastern European dissidents have argued that mass murder in the name of a noble idea is *more* perverse than it is in the name of a base one." There is something discomfiting about drawing such distinctions between horrors, and some commentators (notably historian Alain Besançon) suggested a simpler conclusion: that murder is murder, that the Jew and the kulak are equally dead. But this is precisely Courtois's complaint: While the Jew and the kulak are equally dead, today an adherent to the ideology that killed the Jew is a pariah, while adherents to the ideology that killed the kulak are not.

Reading Courtois's essay, it is hard to see what was so offensive. His is not an effort to demonstrate that Communism was more evil than Nazism. It is a simple plea that both be viewed as evils. But Communism is not in fact viewed as an evil comparable to Nazism. Just a few years ago, the *New York Times* published a long, whimsical story about the CP-USA's 75th-anniversary celebration (octogenarian party chief Gus Hall was described as "hale and hearty"). Can one imagine the *Times* running a similar story about a meeting of American Nazis?

Or witness the furor that erupted earlier this year, when director Elia Kazan was given an Oscar for lifetime achievement, because Kazan had admitted before a congressional committee that he had been a Communist and named his former comrades. Arthur Schles-

inger Jr., the liberal historian, asked whether similar outrage would have burst forth had Kazan been a repentant Nazi who had denounced his former comrades. To the contrary—he would have been hailed as a hero.

Why the double standard? Part of the reason, *The Black Book* suggests, lies in the fact that while Nazism was completely vanquished in World War II—its crimes exposed, its leaders tried and condemned—Communism was never clearly and publicly repudiated in the eyes of the world. After all, the Communists were our allies in the war against the Nazis; Soviet judges even



participated in the trials at Nuremberg.

Nearly as shocking as the deaths recorded in *The Black Book* is the fact that the work is the first effort to document the full extent of Communism's crimes. "Why has it been necessary to wait until the end of the 20th century for this subject to show up on the academic radar screen?" Courtois asks. Why are "names like Himmler and Eichmann . . . recognized around the world as bywords for 20th-century barbarism, [while] the names of Feliks Dzerzhinsky, Genrikh Yagoda and Nikolai Ezhov languish in obscurity?"

This, the authors rightly conclude, is a scandal. Courtois and his colleagues have taken a first, bold step to end this ignorance. But they have done so without illusions. Martin Malia predicts a "very Long March indeed before Communism is accorded its fair share of absolute evil." Perhaps he is right. But at least now, when our children one day ask what the Cold War was about, we can hand them this book. **NR**

Sophia at the Beach

DANIEL P. MOLONEY

A Refutation of Moral Relativism: Interviews with an Absolutist, by Peter Kreeft (Ignatius, 177 pp., \$12.95)

IN Plato's Athens, the practice of writing was just becoming widespread (his teacher Socrates never wrote anything), so philosophy, that favorite Athenian pastime, was usually done through conversations rather than in treatises. Plato held the common belief that philosophy lost something when written down, but realized that it was lost for good unless committed to paper. His solution was to compose philosophical dialogues, hoping that by dramatically presenting a many-sided argument he could seduce the reader into wrestling with the issues just as if he himself were engaged in the discussion.

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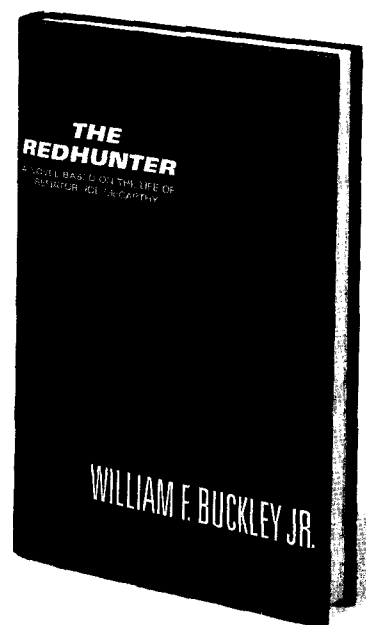
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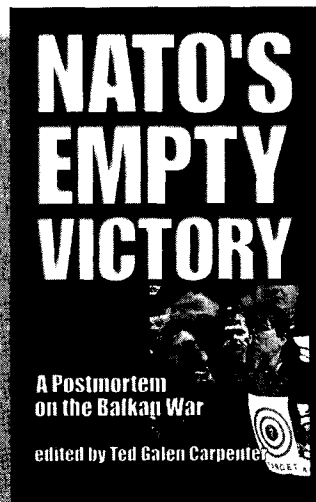


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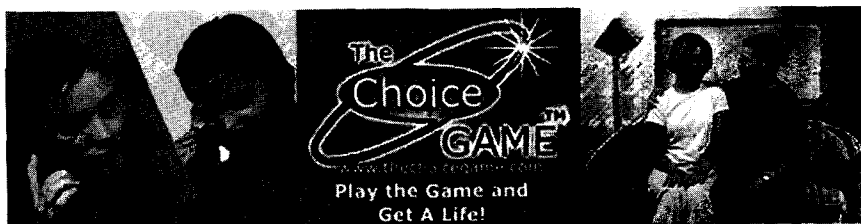
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to time have returned to it as a way of doing philosophy in public. Peter Kreeft of Boston College has a real talent for this type of writing, as his earlier dialogues on abortion (*The Unaborted Socrates*) and the meaning of success (*The Best Things in Life*) amply revealed. In his latest book, Kreeft takes on moral relativism—the idea that what is right and what is wrong differs from culture to culture, from era to era, from person to person.

He sets the dialogue at his own summer house on Martha's Vineyard, where the fictional Kreeft invites two former students for a week of sun, surf, and *sophia*. The arrangement is for Liberty

**Once a moral relativist
starts to think hard
about relativism,
he's a goner.**

("Libby") Rawls, a black feminist journalist, to record an interview with 'Isa Ben Adam, a Muslim philosophy professor who makes the case for truth. Kreeft makes no pretense that the journalist can match the professor in philosophical discourse: Like Socrates in Plato's dialogues, 'Isa (Arabic for "Jesus") is clearly in control. Nevertheless, the sassy, honest Libby—the voice of experience rather than theory—steals the show. She is a more likable character than the know-it-all absolutist, so even when 'Isa wins the argument, he comes off seeming smug and a little impolite (like many a real-life absolutist). As a result, you can give this book to your relativist friends, and they won't think Kreeft shortchanges their side.

For that matter, 'Isa's arguments are not as strong as he seems to think they are. Now, in real life it would be a disaster to claim to refute moral relativism and then not do it well, since one would thereby make the weaker intellectual position look strong (as the sophists accused Socrates of doing). But in the context of a dialogue, having the smug character present a less than airtight

Mr. Moloney is associate editor of *First Things*.

argument is highly seductive. The relativist will find here arguments good enough that he can take them seriously, but weak enough that he is encouraged to refute them, changing in the process from a spectator to a participant. Therein lies Kreeft's artfulness: Once a moral relativist starts to think hard about relativism, he's a goner. For the moral relativism of our culture is unreflective, and cannot withstand much scrutiny. As Prof. Kreeft clearly realizes, the more we trick relativists into thinking about their beliefs, the better it is for Western civilization. NR

■ MUSIC ■

The Okay Gatsby

JAY NORDLINGER

THE last big premiere of the decade, the century, and the you-know-what took place on December 20 at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. The work was (the title should be familiar) *The Great Gatsby* by John Harbison, a New England composer who has been on the fringes of major fame for many years. In *Gatsby* lay his greatest challenge and greatest risk. He may be said to have succeeded in that he did not outright fail. But Fitzgerald's novel, certainly, will last long after Harbison's opera has retreated from the stage.

Which is a grossly unfair, not to say cheap, observation, yes? But Harbison brought it on himself, by selecting for operatic treatment one of the two or three most beloved works in the American canon. Everybody knows this story. Everybody has strong feelings about it, or at least feelings. To scoop it up, to render it in another form, is, in a way, to honor it, but also to trample on sacred ground. "You had better do it justice," is the implied admonition. Did Verdi feel this way on tackling, say, *Macbeth*? Probably not. But then Verdi had a sure sense of his own musical ability, and saw Shakespeare's play as an outlet for that ability. If you seek to seize,

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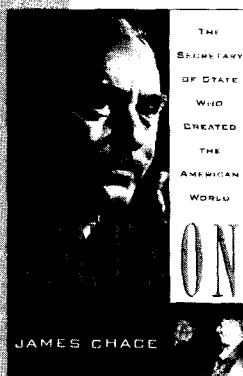
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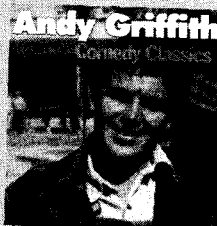


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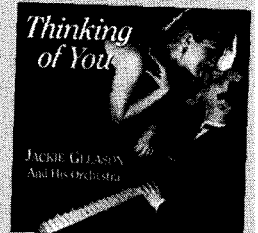
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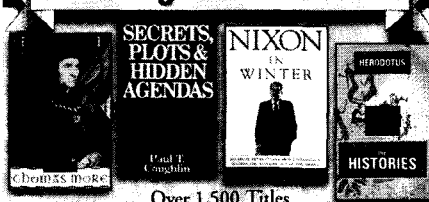
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Harbison would have seemed well prepared for his audacious task. Now just past 60, he has led the laureled life of the achieving U.S. composer: Harvard, Princeton, the Pulitzer prize, the American Academy in Rome, Tanglewood, a MacArthur Foundation grant, handsome commissions, and so on. André Previn took him under his wing, making him composer-in-residence at a couple of orchestras. Harbison has benefited, too, from the admiration and patronage of Dawn Upshaw, the radiant soprano who was his Daisy Buchanan at the Met.

It was on a 1988 album of Upshaw's, hugely popular, that Harbison was introduced to a mass of listeners. Its chief attraction was Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* (after an essay by James Agee), but those who bought the disc for the Barber got Harbison's *Mirabai Songs* too. This cycle treats verses from a woman in 16th-century India, translated by Robert Bly, better known as the drum-beating father of the "men's movement."

An anxiety, almost a neurosis, runs through the work. The soprano has simple melodic lines, while the orchestra beneath her is restless, churning, worried. The cycle is imaginatively scored, especially in its use of percussion. Each song is a little dramatic set-piece—somewhat mannered and ponderous, but that, sadly, is the modern style. The work is slightly monotonous, and there is a hint—just a hint—of minimalism in it, enough to suggest the lulling or trance that is minimalism's hallmark. At their best, the *Mirabai Songs* exude an uneasy sensuousness.

A similar work in Harbison's corpus is *Due Libri dei Mottetti di Montale*. These songs, as the title reveals, set poems of Eugenio Montale, and they, too, are anxious, busy, unsettled. Harbison has a talent for matching literary phrases to musical ones, syllables to notes, whether

in Italian or English; he is also a nice depicter of moods, of feelings, of emotions. These, needless to say, are not unwelcome traits in someone determined to write grand operas.

Harbison is also at home in the American popular idiom, as evidenced by his *Occasional Pieces* for piano. One is *Gospel Shout*, which is cool, jaunty, and rag-like, recalling James P. Johnson, "The Stride King." Another is *Standards*, which employs an annoying minimalist motive that comes from, we realize later, "Tea for Two." There are also snatches of "Melancholy Baby" and, to close, "There's No Business Like Show Business." This is sheer entertainment as well as serious composition, and it is winningly brought off—delicious.

All of Harbison's experience and inclinations come to bear on *The Great Gatsby*. If he does not fully succeed, it is because his bag of tricks seems inadequate to sustain an opera of two and a half hours and large ambition.

On *Premiere Night*, there was a rare buzz of anticipation in the house. Women arrived in Jazz Age garb, as if hoping to

dance the foxtrot. As the orchestra warmed up, several of the wind players practiced jazz licks—an indication of the stylistic duality to come. On the one hand, there would be Roaring Twenties gaiety; on the other, there would be Harbisonian modernism, suited to convey the tragedy and, indeed, insanity of Fitzgerald's story.

Not long after the downbeat, it was clear that all of this composer's elements would be in place: agitation (often a needless agitation), nervous chromaticism, bursts of song, interesting percussion, an affinity for the text, adaptability, repetitiveness—and, smothering all, tedium. The opera tries mightily to rise to greatness, and it has splendid, searing moments, but it cannot quite shake its coat of tedium. Even its many programmatic flourishes—ringing telephones, radios, car horns, choo-choo trains,



John Harbison

Ann Fuller

hot jazz—are unable to loosen the fog.

Which is doubly a shame, because Harbison does a fine job of bringing out the personalities of these familiar characters. He has a firm hand on Daisy's spoiled flightiness, Tom Buchanan's brutishness and insecurity, Nick Carraway's ordinariness and detachment, Jordan Baker's beautiful indolence, and Jay Gatsby's mystery. The scenes involving George Wilson, the garage operator, and his adulterous, miserable wife, Myrtle, are particularly effective. With the oculist's eyes keeping watch, these moments are laced with violence and desperation. Harbison's *Gatsby* is surprisingly dark—darker-seeming than the novel itself. Of course, opera is always blunter than the literature it treats: Verdi's *Otello*, for example, lacks the subtlety and nuance of Shakespeare's *Othello*, while retaining, and even heightening, all of its passion and horror. In the Harbison work, Myrtle's death-scene is almost unbearable for its

■

**Harbison's *Gatsby* is
surprisingly dark—darker-
seeming than the novel itself.**

■

mad cruelty, throwing off, for a moment, the tedium of the opera in general, a tedium that soon—and perhaps appropriately—regains control.

One thing must cause Harbison a degree of sadness: His opera will probably never be so magnificently served as it was in its first performances, by the conductor James Levine and a cast led by Dawn Upshaw. Neither audiences nor singers will clamor for its revival. Tenors, for example, will not crave the title role, as there is too little juicy music for it: *Gatsby*'s arias, or monologues, are rather labored, austere, and bloodless; the love duet with Daisy in Act II lacks . . . well, all of the qualities of a successful love duet, beginning with love. I, for one, would not want to sit through this opera again. But know this too: I thought about Harbison's *Gatsby*—was somewhat haunted and provoked by it—for days after encountering it, and not only because I carried the burden of criticizing it. And that, assuredly, is not nothing.

NR

■ FILM ■

Comedies or Errors

JOHN SIMON

TO continue with the survey of the slew of films that descended on us, like molten lava on Pompeii, at year's, or millennium's, end.

Topsy-Turvy is a departure for its director, Mike Leigh, who specializes in part-bleak, part-comic depictions of contemporary British lower-middle-class life, and improvises endlessly with his cast before beginning to shoot, which always struck me as rather masturbatory and yielded mostly drab films. A historical film about the lives of Gilbert and Sullivan, including many scenes of theatrical rehearsals and performances of their operettas, is the next-to-last thing you'd expect from

Leigh, the last thing being that he would carry it off.

Well, he does, more or less, even if, at 160 minutes, at rather excessive length. Still, the down-to-earth Gilbert and the somewhat la-di-da Sullivan (who really wanted to compose serious operas and once, alas, did) make a fascinating team, the former with his wife, the latter with his mistress. Leigh, who is also a playwright, has a good grasp of theatrical life, and the onstage, backstage, and farther-behind-the-scenes sequences are tart and truthful. The financial aspect of production, the actors' demands for higher pay, the drink and the drugs, the dressing-room bickering are rendered with vivacity and humor.

Other scenes add very little, such as Sullivan's night in a Paris bordello or Gilbert's being accosted on a nocturnal ramble by a demented Irishwoman. But the feel of London life of the period is there, and the scenes from the Savoy operettas are reproduced with solicitous authenticity. Jim Broadbent (Gilbert) and Allan Corduner (Sullivan) are both fine, and so is the supporting cast in which Ron Cook, as the producer D'Oyly Carte,

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especially shines. Yet I couldn't help feeling nostalgic about a more modest 1953 film on this topic, wherein Maurice Evans, Peter Finch, and particularly Robert Morley as Gilbert enchanted me. To be sure, I was younger then.

■ The New York Film Critics Circle, with unsurprising obtuseness, ignored such masterpieces as *Dr. Akagi*, *The Dream Life of Angels*, and the modest but delightful *The Dinner Game*, to crown Pedro Almodóvar's *All About My Mother* as best foreign film. The filmmaker is one of those homosexuals who adore imperious women and tormented young men, and he has turned his predilections to mildly amusing but greatly overrated movies, of which this may be the best, little as that is saying.

The problem is not that Almodóvar is homosexual, but that he is an inveterate fan. His film's title derives from *All About Eve*, which two of the principals watch on television. The film's two lesbian lovers are appearing as Blanche and Stella in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which also figures importantly. Play-acting is everywhere. The heroine, Manuela, is a nurse who plays a major role in a training film about organ donations. When her gifted 17-year-old son, a fan of Huma, the actress playing Blanche, is run over on a rainy night while chasing after Huma's cab for an autograph, Manuela sees fiction become reality as her son's heart is donated to a needy patient.

Grasping her dead son's diary-cum-autograph book, which ends protesting his mother's refusal to reveal anything about his father except that he died long ago, Manuela leaves Madrid for Barcelona. She is looking for that father, Esteban, to tell him about a son he doesn't know he had. She expects that Esteban, a male prostitute who had a sex-change operation and became Lola, will be found in an area known as the Field, where drugs and male prostitution thrive. Instead of Lola, she finds another transsexual, La Agrado, whom she saves from attack by an angry client. La Agrado lived with her and Esteban when they were married.

By a set of complicated circumstances, Manuela adopts Sister Rosa, a pregnant runaway nun who has fallen out with her family. Huma and her lover,

Nina, now playing *Streetcar* in Barcelona, are fighting as usual over Nina's drug addiction. Everyone befriends everyone, and Manuela, who in her village once played Stella in *Streetcar*, even goes on for Nina, who has overdosed. What a memory that Manuela has!

This isn't the half of it, but it's enough for you to see how stage-, movie-, and star-struck Almodóvar is, with even the hospital becoming a place for cinema, which life promptly imitates. Life, for him, replicates stage and screen; everyone is an actor or, preferably, an actress of the most outrageously showy sort. Granted, he knows the gay scene inside-out, and does have a certain campy sense of humor; but does that justify the awards he keeps winning from benighted reviewers?

Certainly the Argentine actress Cecilia Roth (Manuela) does a splendid job, but neither Marisa Paredes, as a repellent Huma-Blanche, nor Candela Peña, as a repugnant Nina-Stella, impresses. Even poorer is Toni Cantó, defeated by the tricky role of Esteban-Lola. But the film does have one bravura performance by Antonia San Juan as the transsexual prostitute La Agrado, which is not, however, enough to save a largely trashy film.

■ *Man on the Moon* was made by Milos Forman with the same writers he used on *The People vs. Larry Flynt*, but it is much less interesting. Not only was Flynt a more fascinating character than the outlandish comedian Andy Kaufman, whose story this is, but the earlier film also involved issues such as free speech. The new movie is merely a recital of the bizarre life and shenanigans of a far-out comedian who would fight a woman in the ring, invented an even creepier alter ego whom he impersonated in disguise, and could either torment an audience at Yale by reading all of *The Great Gatsby* out loud, or cosset another at Carnegie Hall by herding them into school buses for milk and cookies at an empty school. He also pulled off the ultimate coup by dying young, the surest way of becoming a legend.

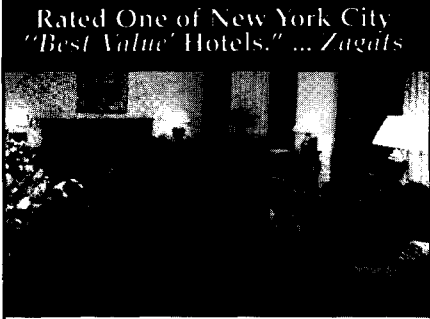
Jim Carrey, who largely modeled himself on Kaufman, plays him persuasively, and there is a good supporting cast. But the film desperately lacks a point of view or any attempt to get any deeper than the comedian's admittedly thick skin. **NR**

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Gender-Bendering At Large

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 10

MR. CLINTON gave one of his stellar performances, facing the press on Wednesday and answering fluently any number of questions, a *tour d'horizon* of the kind that undoubtedly impressed the Rhodes Committee when they looked him over, age 21. He stalled only at the end, when he found himself face to face with one of those ugly obstacles to truth and light by the Clinton canon. He tried at first to get away from it by challenging the nomenclature. The question: How come, boss, your critical aides have always been white men?

Whaddayamean!—"I disagree with that. What are they?"

The questioner was well prepared: "Chief of staff, national-security, domestic-policy, economic advisers, White House counsel, press secretary, senior adviser/counselor."

Mr. Clinton lumbered about. He was "unaware" that those were the "seven most important jobs in my cabinet, I mean, in the White House." He then went on to cite the profligacy of his appointments of women, blacks, Hispanics, and Asians to other posts in government. He said in some cases he had approached minorities who preferred the job they already had to more exalted jobs. And so on.

What was most striking about his response was his apparent repudiation of affirmative action. "I have never not tried to recruit minorities for any job . . . in the White House [which is like asking what the meaning of "is" is] and I have never followed a quota system."

Why not? He expects others to do so.

The woman question comes up all the time. A week ago eight men convened at Ole Miss to do a television debate on the question of whether Internet commerce should be taxed. At a press conference before the debate a black woman reporter asked why there were no women on the panel. The host answered that he simply didn't know why there weren't any women on the panel. There were two black gentlemen, one of them the secretary of state of Ohio and chairman of the Steve Forbes campaign, the other, the gifted mayor of Dallas.

Michael Kinsley, the moderator, said

after the conference had ended that the questioner might have been asked what was a distinctively feminine approach to the question, Should Internet commerce be taxed? Sound advice, though bitter-end gender-preference detectors can always come up with something, even if it is only that women's sensibilities are different from men's (correct), and that these prompt women to different conclusions (incorrect) and policy approaches (incorrect). One fears the questioner might have dwelt on the special burden of a sales tax on women who do more spot-shopping on the Internet than men do, but, of course, who does more Internet shopping has nothing to do with whether it should be taxed. There is no facile escape from such a question, and at the White House you would not have expected to hear from Mr. Gender Equality any such answer as that, out of bed, he finds the company of white males more congenial—it was best left to him to recite how many minorities his administration had hired in other jobs, though his answer did recall the Irish defendant who gave the names of 35 people who hadn't seen him kill the girl.

Some century-watchers have classified equal rights for women as the single greatest achievement of the age, and this is in some ways correct, especially when one reflects that it was less than a century ago that women were denied the vote. It may still be that some men would shrink from voting for a woman as president of the United States, but if so, that inhibition can't stay around much longer, in the age of Margaret Thatcher, the string of women who govern India and New Zealand, the women governors of states, and justices on the Supreme Court; indeed women outnumber men in the law schools. But in terms of the general arithmetic, it pays to remember that women will always be outnumbered in professions that tend to require undistracted attention, given the interruptions that motherhood importu-

nately claims on women, and President Clinton might have made the point. But if he had, he'd have left a longer sizzle of cordite, resulting, down the line, in strategic detonations at gender-frenzied forums.

A true sense of the proper kind of equality (some perquisites remain feminine, and should do so) will be here when such questions as were asked of the president and of the host of the debate at Ole Miss are greeted by signs of dismissive impatience by other members of the press. Maybe this will be the case sometime in the next millennium.

That's Life!

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 14

THE philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once said that the key insight into any society in any age is had by inquiring into what people *didn't* write about; because that is what those people, in that age, simply took for granted. Elizabethan England didn't write about alternative forms of government because monarchy was the way they did things—end question. The *New York Times Book Review* for last week will certainly give future anthropologists a hint about the way sexual behavior is done/judged in end-of-century America. It is (commonly) done without any sense whatever of right/wrong, loyalty/disloyalty, fidelity/infidelity, consequence/inconsequence.

If the reviewer of the book (*Full Exposure*, by Susie Bright) had any sense that controversy was being attempted by its author, she certainly doesn't tell us. The reviewer, Prof. Helen Fisher, is an anthropologist at Rutgers, and is herself an author: *The First Sex: The Natural Talents of Women and How They Are Changing the World*. She is reviewing a book the subtitle of which is *Opening Up to Sexual Creativity and Erotic Expression*. And we are told, matter-of-factly, that Ms. Bright, the author, promises to "cut through all the labels and politics and reveal what I've learned about sex."

Cut through all the labels and politics? What does that mean? "We learn that Bright likes orgies because they raise her 'consciousness,' that she has lived as a lesbian, that she currently has a male lover, that she gambols along the lecture circuit advocating freer sexual expression."

Freer than what? That is the question



Prof. Whitehead would be entitled to ask. Back when adultery was thought wrong, a scarlet letter was etched onto the offender's breast, which was one—unpleasant—way of advertising the protocols of the day. The movement from a scarlet letter to . . . nothing . . . would appear to be not only where we are headed on the matter of adultery, but where we have arrived. Or so the reviewer seems to be saying:

"[Ms.] Bright advocates greater sexual expression. Her crusade may have been laudable in past decades, but today I think she is preaching largely to the converted." The reviewer seems to be saying that it was laudable to move away from fidelity, but that having moved away as comprehensively as we have done, what is the point in going on about the subject? Like writing a book endorsing the Bill of Rights. "Although this country certainly has its share of prudes, I don't regard this era as sexually puritanical. American women (like women in many other cultures) have begun to engage in sex earlier in life, take more sex partners before marriage, live with partners outside marriage, and demand varied forms of sexual satisfaction from their lovers. They also marry later and divorce when spouses do not suit their sexual and social needs."

Just so. Why is anybody writing a book about anything so obvious?

Books could certainly be written to document that sex comes earlier in life; so does grandmotherhood. There are more sex partners and more divorces and also more disease and more shipwrecked households and deserted children and— isn't this the true complaint?—less satisfaction in sex, as the search for it is pressed without any sense of restraint or priority. It is nowhere confirmed that the most varied sexual practitioner, the Marquis de Sade, was the most satisfied man of his time, nor that the priapic Don Juan took greater net satisfaction from life than those monogamists who enjoy life hugely, and see in it other joys and satisfactions than the libido Ms. Bright goes on so about.

The following day's paper told of a new show off Broadway. "A sadly aging flower-child feminist tries to distract a chic young woman from her laptop with a story about the death of an infant; an H.I.V.-infected mother instructs her mixed-race teenager on the politically correct strategies for filling out a college application; a pornographic model declares love for her homosexual photographer; a female theater director foully stimulates a male actor in a restaurant, a profane parody of the casting couch." A profane parody of

the life Ms. Bright celebrates as ideal, and Prof. Fisher acknowledges as perhaps the only ideal absolutely realized as we approach the millennium, giving future historians the special task of inquiring into what it was that people didn't complain about anymore, at the end of the century.

Where Does God Get Into the Act?

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 21

I am gone! For two weeks' vacation! I am wild with liberty! And inclined to dwell for a moment on a question I have been asked in other forums in the past few days, namely, what do I think of the answer given by presidential candidate George W. Bush to the question: Which political philosopher or thinker did he identify with? His answer was Christ, "because He changed my heart." An okay answer?

Let's touch down, however briefly, on those critics who are offended, I'd think unnecessarily, by the mere mention of God as a political mentor. Charles Krauthammer goes all the way: "For those who are secular, it is scary. You watch these debates, brimming with God talk, and you catch a whiff of the Taliban." Well, the nose here has to be extraordinarily twitchy, because the candidates who sort of swung with God when the question was asked are as unlikely to advocate Muslim extremism as Al Smith was to invite the Pope to come on over and take charge, when such a suspicion was encouraged in 1928.

Nobody was going to object, at the Republican debates, to a call to restore morality. But is that call—to a moral renaissance—to be sharply distinguished from an oblation to the godhead of morality? George Washington admonished against any "supposition" that "morality can be maintained without religion." "Reason and experience," he commented, "both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle." And the context in which Washington spoke was hardly sectarian. President Washington wrote with poetic force to the Hebrew congregation of Savannah on the divine auspices of intercredal toleration. "May the same wonder-working Deity, who long since delivered the Hebrews from their Egyptian oppressors . . . continue to water them with the dews of heaven and make the inhabitants of every denomination participate in the

temporal and spiritual blessings of that people whose God is Jehovah."

But a different question has also been raised, namely whether it is correct to summon Christ as a source of political philosophy. In one obvious sense, God (Christ was God, in the Christian understanding) clearly is the source of what should be the underlying planks of political philosophy, namely the civil question of how to organize a society in which all men are equal, and should be free.

The difficulty arises in suggesting that God is going to emanate a platform for the GOP. And that difficulty is at the heart of the problem of God as a political philosopher in the context in which that question was posed during the debate.

Since we are whiffing things, here is a whiff of God that suggests the dimensions in which He is taken. "What art Thou then, my God? Most highest, most good, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful, yet most just; most hidden, yet most present; most beautiful, yet most strong; stable, yet incomprehensible; unchangeable, yet all-changing; never new, never old; all-renewing, and bringing age upon the proud, and they know it not; seeking, yet having all things?" The language of a great poet and metaphysician, St. Augustine. In the face of such a God as that, one shrinks from pleading His support for a political agenda, though God's sanction was specifically and critically sought in the long program to abolish slavery, in England and here.

In the absence of contradiction, it is correct to assume that Gov. Bush is sincere in citing God as the cause of that special heartbeat that changed his life. True, we are cynical in the age in which Mr. Clinton goes from Easter services to the adulterer's couch in a single day. But the great lesson of Elmer Gantry, the hypocritical preacher in the novel of Sinclair Lewis, isn't that man can deceive and surreptitiously defy the very laws that he preaches; it is, rather, that the laws of behavior that guide the Judaeo-Christian world are everlastingly relevant in part because they are so regularly traduced.

So yes, one can criticize the political candidate who cites Christ in answer to a question having to do with political philosophy. But this only on the grounds that the grandiosity is on the order of citing air as your favorite food. But forgetting that, it is invigorating, in a secular age in which the exhibition of the Ten Commandments is cited as profane constitutional behavior, to have it straight from such as Mr. Bush, what it is that he thinks of first in the search for priorities.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

I SPEAK to you from my bed of pain, felled by one too many millennial lists. Somewhere between the 1,000 Most Significant Somethings and the 100 Greatest WhatEVERs, I lost it. I am now sick of everybody who was anybody, including Churchill.

The trouble with lists is that they are the work of conformists. Take, for example, that old standby, the Ten Most Admired, an annual exercise in lockstep opinion ever since I can remember. Year after year, it was always the same; an overnight newsmaker might occasionally break through the phalanx of acceptable thinking, but otherwise it boiled down to the President, the First Lady, and Billy Graham.

The millennial lists exceeded mere conformity to achieve the most rigid political correctness yet seen. Nelson Mandela was on everything except Entomologists Who Changed Our Lives, Gloria Steinem was right up there with Edison on the one about light-shedders, and Crazy Horse joined Oscar Wilde on Most Misunderstood.

If the cure for democracy is more democracy, then the cure for lists is more lists, so I have compiled People I Instinctively Like for My Own Quirky Reasons Whether I Ought To or Not.

SOCRATES—With a single sentence, "The unexamined life is not worth living," he gave introspection a good name, making it possible for people to figure out, among other things, why they feel it necessary to put the President, the First Lady, and Billy Graham on Most Admired lists.

CARDINAL RICHELIEU—The feline aesthete who pulled France from under the ineffectual Louis XIII is the perfect antidote to presidential candidates who heap praise on "the American people" in every other sentence. "Though he loved France," writes Will Durant, "Frenchmen left him cold."

What I admire most about Richelieu is the guiding principle he called *raison d'état*, the "reason of state" that decided

his every move. As he defined it: "A Christian cannot too soon forgive an offense, but a ruler cannot too soon punish it if it be a crime against the state." I've always thought that was a neat way around Nice Guyism.

TALLEYRAND—Usually described, for brevity's sake, as Napoleon Bonaparte's foreign minister, he was actually all things to all men, slipping between the meshing gears of French political upheavals to position himself in the right place at the right time in the manner of Dick Morris.

An aristocrat who was consecrated a bishop, he aligned himself with the National Assembly, the Revolution, the Constitutional Monarchy, the Republic, the Directory, the Consulate, the Empire, the

Bourbon Restoration, and finally, the July Monarchy. When Louis-Philippe was crowned, he asked Talleyrand, "How many governments have you sworn allegiance to?" Unruffled, Talleyrand replied, "Sire, yours is the thirteenth."

In an era of despicable amorlists like Bill Clinton, Talleyrand comes across as a likable one. To understand the difference we need look no further than the furious words of the parvenu Napoleon, who called him "a silk stocking filled with s***" At least it was silk.

SGT. ALVIN YORK—The hero of World War I wasn't taken prisoner, he took prisoners—132 of them, to be exact. In this last great military feat before women got the vote, the word "hero" meant exactly that: a man who takes the initiative and does something aggressive singlehandedly.

Today, "hero" must have a passive connotation and involve a group or else we dare not use it. From the capture of the crew of the *Pueblo* in 1968, to the Teheran embassy hostages in 1979, to the current absorption in John McCain's ordeal in the Hanoi Hilton, we have steadily burdened heroism with so many disclaimers that it has come to describe being in the wrong place at the wrong time with lots of great people.

RADCYFFE HALL—The British author of the 1928 lesbian novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, was not lonely. She had no

trouble seducing the breathtakingly beautiful Una Troubridge away from her knighted husband, and lived openly with her for years in a classic butch-femme arrangement. Hall especially enjoyed playing the husband in public, but there the resemblance to today's most famous lesbian couple ends.

Ellen DeGeneres and Anne Heche smooched and felt each other up at the White House Correspondents' Dinner, but Radclyffe and Una celebrated their difference differently. Now that familiarity is breeding contempt like rabbits, I wish I could go back in time to Claridge's and listen in when Hall, after making sure she had the other diners' attention, told the waiter in a loud voice: "Lady Troubridge will have the lamb."

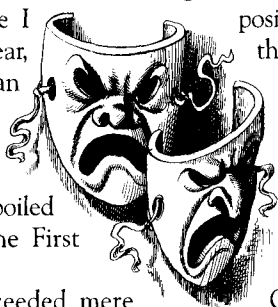
ELEANOR GEHRIG—The Gary Cooper movie about the life of doomed ballplayer Lou Gehrig portrayed Eleanor the way all such movies portrayed the wife: as the keeper of the flame who kept the scrapbook.

The scrapbook scene used to be the backbone of movies about celebrated men. Whenever the screenwriter needed a quick way to show the hero's increasing fame, the passage of time, or his wife's selfless devotion, the camera zoomed in on a huge jar of white paste and a pair of feminine hands pressing down on a newspaper clipping that always fit exactly on the scrapbook page the way real clippings never do. The message was: A good woman always miter her corners.

The Eleanor Gehrig portrayed by Teresa Wright in *The Pride of the Yankees* comes across as someone content to spend her life cutting, pasting, and adoring, but the real Eleanor was not that sticky. A witty, sophisticated woman who knew the score far better than her mama's-boy husband, she was canonized along with him, but one story about her illustrates just how different they were, and raises the possibility that if ALS hadn't killed him, Eleanor eventually might have been driven to do him in herself.

When he was striving to set a record of 2,000 consecutive games, she remarked that stopping at 1,999 would make a much more interesting statistic—and the poor earnest lug didn't get it. **NR**

Miss King can be reached at P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.



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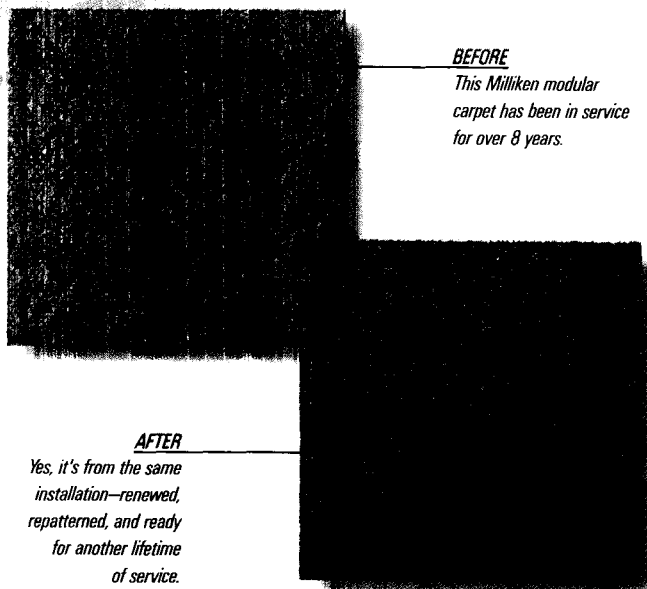
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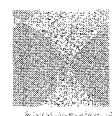


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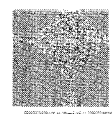
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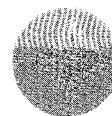
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2



old carpet recovered

3



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carpet fibers retextured

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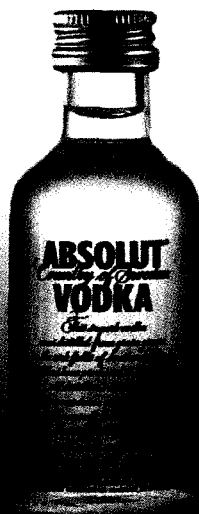


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